THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

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THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

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THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

SIX LECTURES GIVEN IN
WESTMINSTER ABBEY

By H. C. BEECHING, M.A., D.Litt.
CANON OF WESTMINSTER

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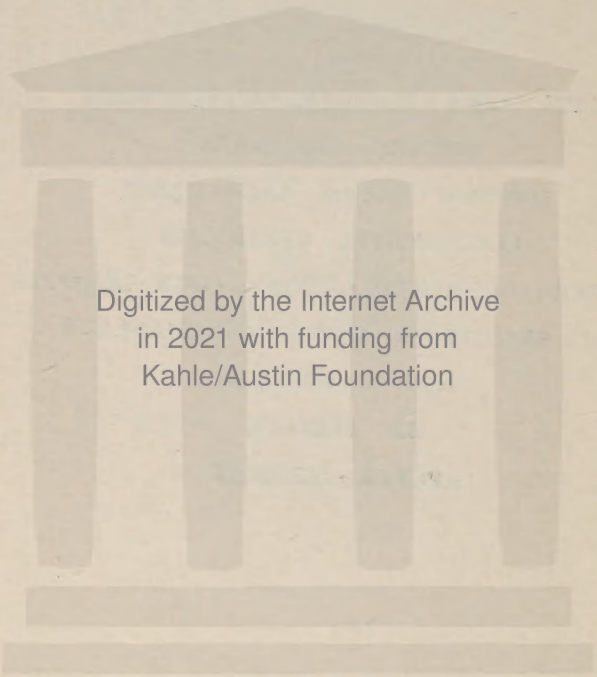

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In sending to press a third series of lectures delivered in Westminster Abbey on the Friday afternoons in Lent, it may be allowable to repeat that my aim in this, as in the previous courses, has been to interest and instruct those brethren of the laity who, with leisure to give their minds to such matters, have had no special theological training. As the lectures are occupied directly with the investigation of Bible doctrine, and only as a consequence with the deepening of the spiritual life, I have added two sermons preached in the Abbey, which deal in a more homiletic way with one or two of the same topics.

Some of my obligations I have acknowledged in the notes appended to the lectures; others, which cannot be so precisely defined, I must

include in the general debt of friendship; to one friend, Mr. Nairne, of King's College, I would acknowledge a particular debt for his kindness in once more criticising my proofs.

H. C. B.

Michaelmas, 1908.

OMP̄ SEMP̄ DS̄ QUI NULLI NOS INFERRE MANDASTI QUOD NOBIS NON OPTAMUS INFERRI PRAESTA QUAESUMUS UT NEC FINGAMUS ALIIS NEC ALIORUM FICTIONIBUS INLUDAMUR PER.

Sacr. Leonian.

CONTENTS

LECTURE I

The word "Sacrament" came into Christian use from the Latin versions of the New Testament, in which *sacramentum* represented the Greek word μυστήριον (mystery) when used to express a symbol or symbolic rite. In the early Church the term had a very wide application, which gradually narrowed itself to certain religious rites; it is now, in the English Church, usually restricted to the two ordinances of Christ Himself, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Such symbolic rites seem designed to counteract the opposite religious perils of materialism and superstition, both as testifying to the existence of Spirit in the world of nature, and at the same time interpreting the character of the Spirit to whose existence they witness. Further, they meet the needs of human nature by appealing not only to the intellect but to the whole man, mind, emotion, and will. They may thus be compared with the symbols of art and literature and music, which are of recognised force in conveying truth through the imagination. If the question be asked, how sacraments convey grace, it should be sufficient to remind ourselves, first, that the grace which the sacraments convey is the "spirit," or divine humanity of Christ, which He has promised to His disciples in response to their faith; and secondly, that Christ is always present with His Church. It follows that the purpose of sacraments is to convey grace as they kindle faith.

PAGE

LECTURE II

Baptism, as its name denotes, is essentially a washing, such as was prescribed in most religions as a remedy for ceremonial uncleanness. In particular it was used at the reception of Jewish converts from heathendom. John the Baptist, following the later Jewish prophets, had distinguished between such baptism, as the symbol of repentance, and the Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit, which should not only wash away sins, but confer the principle of a new life. Christian baptism, therefore, as administered in the apostolic Church, was understood to bring with it "the gift of the Holy Spirit." This is made certain by an examination of passages in the Acts of the Apostles; from which it also appears that "the imposition of hands" was not an ordinary accompaniment of baptism, but was used with prayer for certain special "gifts" of the Spirit, such as "tongues" or "healing." According to St. Paul, Christian baptism (1) admits into the society of the new covenant; (2) conveys to the new member the qualification for membership, viz. the spirit of sonship to God and love towards the brethren; and so (3) brings with it the remission of past sins. But St. Paul also recognises that the "new life" of the Spirit exists invarious degrees among Christian men, and needs continual reinforcement from the same Spirit. The recognition of this fact to-day would decide the controversy as to the meaning of regeneration in baptism, and allow us, while admitting that in the New Testament regeneration is not distinguished from conversion, to employ the word of any degree of access to the regenerating Spirit of Christ. The baptismal formula in the name of the Trinity may perhaps have taken the place of a more primitive formula in the name of the Lord Jesus.

LECTURE III

Infant Baptism is not prescribed in the Acts or Epistles, and there is no clear evidence that it was practised in Apos-

LECTURE VI

PAGE

His body ; (2) that He is present in the same Holy Spirit, through whom He made the offering of His own earthly life, in order that the Church in all its members may make the same offering ; (3) that the presence of Christ in His Spirit is realised and still further communicated as we lift our hearts to Him and receive the symbols of His Passion ; (4) that the Spirit of Christ so realised and communicated unites not only each member to Christ, but each to every other.

TWO SERMONS

THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

I

THE SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual Rock that followed them: and the Rock was Christ.—1 Cor. x. 1-4.

We may seem to be going outside the teaching of Scripture in the very title of these lectures, which professedly make their appeal to Scripture, and Scripture only. For Scripture knows nothing of the word "Sacrament" as a technical term. Nevertheless, it is found in the Latin versions of the New Testament, as a translation of the Greek word *μυστήριον* (mystery), in the same general sense as that in which we employ it—that is to say, a symbol or symbolic rite,

which has a secret meaning. St. John in the Revelation speaks of the Seven Stars and the Seven Golden Candlesticks as a μυστήριον, which Wicliff's version, following the Latin, renders "sacrament"; and St. Paul, when speaking of the union of man and wife in marriage, calls it a mystery or sacrament, on the ground that we cannot know what human love should be until we understand the relation of Christ to His Church. "He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ the church: for we are members of his body. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." And then follow the words which we may paraphrase—"Marriage is thus a symbol of a deep truth, the relation of Christ and the Church."[1] This last example brings us nearly, though not quite, to what we mean by a Sacrament, for it implies a social rite practised not only for its own

[1] *Cf.* Coleridge, *Table Talk* (September 27, 1830): "St. Paul says it is a great symbol, not mystery—as we translate it."

sake, but for a religious meaning which is discerned in it. In a Christian marriage a Roman of the Empire would have seen nothing but the same legal forms which he himself practised, and which sat so lightly on both parties to the contract that divorce was not so much the exception as the rule. But to the Christian there was suggested in the marriage bond that indissolubility of mutual love which binds the Church to Christ and Christ to the Church. Similarly, if a Roman had surprised a meeting of the faithful assembled to keep the Lord's Supper, he would have seen in it only one of the numerous guilds or benefit societies of the period met to foster the principle of brotherhood. But a Christian would have told him that, though the feast was certainly this, there was much more behind ; that the brotherhood was not a natural brotherhood formed on some human principle of association, but a fellowship of all sorts and conditions united in the one Spirit of Jesus, so that what seemed but a casual society was nothing less than the Body of the Christ of God. This, then, is the underlying notion of a Sacrament—that certain actions which have (as all actions have) a

recognised signification among men are done with a deeper significance which only members of the religious society can discern. In this general sense the term has obviously a wide application, and any one who will turn to the article "Sacraments" in the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* will see how widely it was applied in the early Church. For example, our Lord's Birth, Death, and Resurrection are spoken of as Sacraments, because the reality of those events so greatly transcended their appearance. But our own Church, without denying that a great many things are sacramental—indeed St. Paul would tell us that everything we do should be sacramental, as being (beyond its immediate purpose) concerned with God's glory—our Church of England in its Catechism, following St. Paul in this place of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, has made a distinction, and limited the term to the two great actions ordained by our Lord Himself,[1] whose entire purpose is

[1] "What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?" "I mean an outward and visible sign . . . ordained by Christ Himself. . . ." "How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in His Church?" "Two only, as generally necessary to salvation."

sacramental—that is to say, which are practised not for the sake of the actions themselves, washing or eating, but altogether for a purpose beyond, which those actions typify.

The question is sometimes asked—it has been asked with especial emphasis by the Society of Friends—why, in a religion claiming to be spiritual, so much importance should be attached to symbolic actions. And we are sometimes told that the Christian religion, by the stress it lays upon ceremonial worship, proves that it has never succeeded in emancipating itself from the Judaism out of which it sprang. It might seem to many of us a sufficient reply to plead the authority and perfect wisdom of our Founder; for surely, without some such express order from Him as the Gospels record, the practice of the Apostolic Church is inexplicable. Still, even for ourselves who accept the Divine commandment to "baptize" and "break bread," it may be allowed reverently to ponder those commandments, and see how they are fitted to the needs of human nature.

1. Let us ask, then, in the first place, What are the chief religious perils which beset a

man's path through the world? They are two, sometimes alternating with each other, sometimes combined—superstition and materialism. In the early stages of civilisation men, as a rule, do not doubt the fundamental truth of all religion, that behind the world we see moves a Presence, invisible and of great power, with whom it is our duty and our happiness to live in sympathy. Their trouble is that, apart from revelation, they necessarily misconceive the nature of this Presence. They make gods in their own image, and transfer to them their own strongest passions. Hence we find that the kings and priests and prophets of Judah, after in vain expostulating with the people for their superstition, found it necessary in the end to restrict public worship to one central shrine, in order to ensure that the God whom the people worshipped should be the God who had revealed Himself to them—"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, and that would in no wise clear the guilty"—the God, in one word, of "mercy and truth," and not a Baal, a personification of the forces of nature, a symbol of the bare

facts of growth and decay. One enemy, therefore, of true religion is superstition. But when civilisation reaches a higher stage and the reflective powers have increased, it happens sometimes that, looking back upon the progress of religion in the world, and seeing how prone people are to read themselves into nature, the conclusion is reached that all religion is superstition, and that there is nothing in the world but what appears to the reason and the sense: this is materialism, the second great enemy of religion. And, of course, this materialistic state of mind can be reached not only by reflection upon the world, but by mere absorption in its more superficial aspects; by entire pre-occupation with men on their mechanical side, and things on their mechanical side; so that nothing seems to exist but matter and force.

These, then, being the two chief influences which tempt men to forget God, the institution of Sacraments seems designed to meet and counteract them. As against the materialistic tendency, it offers a simple, natural action, practised just in order that it may be perceived to be something more than natural; it opens a

door into heaven, and brings us into touch with the powers of the world to come; while, as against the superstitious tendency, which does not need convincing of the existence of an eternal world behind appearances, but needs—as, of course, the other tendency also needs—an adequate revelation of its true nature, it offers, by its symbols, a most simple and, at the same time, most illuminating discovery of the character and purpose of the God with whom we have to do.

2. Again, we may see the wisdom of our Lord's provision for us if we remember the mixed constitution of man's nature—mind, emotions, and will. There are men, like the great Calvin, in whom the intellect so domineers over the rest of their nature that they can hardly conceive of Divine grace being received except through the gate of the intelligence. To them the "Word" of Christ is everything; not only do they find in the Word "spirit and life" for themselves, but it is the one way in which they can conceive of "spirit and life" being conveyed. In consequence, the ministry of the Sacraments has seemed to such persons apt to be over-esteemed in comparison with

the ministry of the Word. But the majority of men have a different experience. Our Lord's parable of the Sower but too faithfully reflects our habitual receptions of the Word, which lack the firm grasp upon it that is a pre-condition of its putting forth its vital power ; whereas in the Sacraments an appeal is made which must, to some degree, banish spiritual sloth, for it is made to the whole man ; something is to be understood, yes, but also something is to be embraced and something is to be done. The whole unity of being is taken up into the act of faith ; and, if so, the man becomes, in virtue of the Sacrament, what the Word alone might fail to make him.

3. Further, pursuing the same thought of the adaptation of Sacraments to our human needs, we may notice how large a part symbols play in our higher life. There is a real and Divine world all about us, though custom hides it from our view ; and nothing seems to be so potent a power in making us realise this spiritual world as the imaginative symbol, which breaks up the solid surface of familiarity which custom lays upon things and shows us the truth living and palpitating beneath. To

accomplish this task is one main function of the imaginative arts, which, at their best, are not only representations of nature and human life, but interpretations of them. The masters of landscape painting can never hope to reproduce the exquisiteness of any single detail of natural beauty ; but what they can do is to disengage from the whole mass of phenomena certain harmonies of line and colour and grouping which shall suggest to the spectator's mind some aspect of the mighty whole—some mood (may we say ?) of power or peace in that Spirit—

> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air
> And the blue sky.

Or again, met as we are here to-day for worship in this Abbey Church, can we fail to recognise how much, in that act of worship, our spirits are helped by the building in which we find ourselves ? It is not that the site is holy ground more than other. "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool ; what house will ye build me, saith the Lord, or what is the place of my

rest?" (Acts vii. 49.) We claim no *fani religio* for our loved Church, other than it has acquired by its dedication to, and age-long association with, holy things; but we do claim for it, beyond this, that it ministers to faith by its sheer imaginative beauty. "The principle of Gothic architecture," said Coleridge, "is infinity made imaginable,"[1] and it is the representation of that thought of infinity in the imaginative symbols of architecture which makes it so potent an influence upon our spirits.

So it is with music. We shall all remember Newman's eloquent plea for the recognition of music as a symbol of the unseen. "Can it be," he asks, "that those mysterious stirrings of heart and keen emotions and strange yearnings after we know not what, and awful impressions from we know not whence, should be wrought in us by what is unsubstantial, and comes and goes, and begins and ends in itself? It is not so; it cannot be. No, they have escaped from some higher sphere; they are the outpourings of eternal harmony in the medium of created sound; they are echoes from our home; they are the voice of angels, or the

[1] *Table Talk* (June 29, 1833).

Magnificat of saints, or the living laws of Divine governance, or the Divine attributes."[1] That is to say, Newman declares great music to be sacramental. However this may be, no one responsive to musical impressions will hesitate to admit that such a piece of music, let us say, as Brahms' *German Requiem*, by means of the translation into musical symbolism of the insight or inspiration of the musician, has enabled him to realise, as in no other way, what George Fox saw in vision as "an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the ocean of darkness." It would be easy also to illustrate from the whole method of the poetical art how inspiration and illumination come to our souls from that form also of the imaginative symbol. It will be enough for our present purpose to recall how the ancient prophets, while they forbade the people to make any visible likeness of God because of the necessary inadequacy of any such likeness, exhausted the resources of poetical imagery to bring home to the people His real share in their lives. And, to go higher still, I would ask whether

[1] *Sermons before the University of Oxford*, xiv.

any word of poet or seer has ever laid so strong a grasp upon the hearts of men as that simple image in which our Lord summed up His relation to mankind: "I am the Good Shepherd." Why is it? Why does it touch our hearts? We can only say that it illuminates as by a sudden flash, and as no mere detailed description could possibly do, our weakness and foolishness and need of guidance, and at the same time the perfect power and absolute willingness of Christ to supply all our needs; and by means of the searching truth of its revelation it touches the springs of our emotion, and through our emotion reaches our will. And it was but a further extension of the same universal method of bringing a spiritual truth home to men when, having said, "The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world," our Lord appointed a feast at which bread should be eaten as being His Flesh.

The parallel, then, of the imaginative arts may help us to recognise more than one reason for our Lord's use of these symbolic rites. It reminds us that all imaginative pictures are more appealing and more expressive than mere logical statements, and also that they are

truer to the facts of life as being the creation of a faculty deeper and more comprehensive than the reason. Take, for example, the Sacrament of Baptism. Could any rite be simpler? Its significance, one might say, could be expressed in ten words. But notice how, under the pressure of St. Paul's spiritual experience, the Sacrament unfolds. At first he refers to it just as the passage to a new life under Divine guidance (1 Cor. x. 1); then he emphasises the fact that this new life, so bestowed, is nothing less than a putting on of Christ (Gal. iii. 27); then this putting on of Christ itself unfolds, and Baptism is declared to be a union with Christ in His Death and Burial and Resurrection (Rom. vi. 3). Finally, Baptism, as the work of the Holy Spirit, is declared to be the symbol of Church unity (Eph. iv. 6). To speak, then, as some Christians allow themselves to do, of the Sacraments as *mere* symbols shows a misapprehension of the rank of symbols in the spiritual world. It was because the eternal verities which Christ bequeathed to men were to feed men's souls for ever that He clothed them in symbols; for the truth of a symbol

is inexhaustible. It is our rationalising explanations of the Sacraments that deserve the epithet "mere."

4. But once more the question is asked, how symbols can convey Divine grace. A more reasonable question, it might seem, would be whether they do convey grace; for if experience were conclusive on this head, the method would be of unimportance. I suppose most Christians would admit that there have been times when their feelings have been so deeply stirred in Communion that no logic on earth could convince them that they had not been in touch with the Highest; and again, that there have been times of coldness and deadness when they seemed to be doing little more than rehearse a ceremony. The human spirit has its tides of devotion. Faith is not always what faith would fain ever be. It is, then, in order to reassure and strengthen faith, and not from mere idle theorising, that theologians have not scrupled to attempt the question as to how Sacraments convey grace. Nevertheless, as the purpose of these lectures is to examine Bible doctrine only, I do not intend to discuss any of these

well-known theories which have divided Christendom. We may find, if we can make clear to ourselves from Scripture what this Divine grace is of which we speak, and who and where is the Giver, that faith will obtain assurance enough in the written Word to enable it to take the step commanded, without more curious inquiry.

First, then, let us ask, What do we mean by grace? According to St. Paul, grace is the free favour or goodness of Christ Jesus to all men, displayed in the gift to them of Himself. From meaning the goodwill that prompted the gift, it came to mean the gift itself; as we see in such a passage as 1 Cor. xv. 10: "By the *grace* of God I am what I am: and his *grace* which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me"; where the labouring "grace" is the same power which elsewhere St. Paul describes as the "strengthening Christ" (Phil. iv. 13), and as the Spirit of Christ and God (Rom. viii. 9). Christ being essentially God and Spirit, can only give Himself as Spirit, and to spirit. This is our Lord's teaching on

the subject in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel after the miracle of feeding the multitude. He had promised to give them eternal life; but He explained that He could not give them "life" without giving them Himself. "I," He said, "am the bread of life"—the true heavenly manna. Then, in order to hint to them that this task of self-giving was not to be accomplished without agony and death, He changed the term from "bread" to "flesh and blood." "The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." But when this physical expression staggered them He changed it once more to "Spirit." "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing." Christ's great gift to men was to be the gift of Himself in His new humanity, perfected through self-sacrifice in death, and humanity consists not in "flesh and blood," but in "spirit." Let me pause here to say that I know this word "spirit" has, in the ears of many people, an unreal and unsubstantial sound. In regard to the Eucharist,

for example, they seem to be saying more when they speak of receiving "the Body and Blood" of Christ than when they speak of receiving the "Spirit" of Christ. But that is because they do not ask themselves what they mean by either expression. Our Lord used the word "spirit," and St. Paul used it after Him, as the highest term possible expressive of personal life, because spirit is the one reality in the world, being what God is. What the word implies in this its full Divine meaning we cannot, of course, tell, but we know something of what spirit means in ourselves,[1] and man was made in the image of God. A human spirit thinks and wills and loves. It was the characteristic of the Spirit of Christ that He performed these typical human actions in their Divine perfection, thinking the thoughts of God, willing the will of God, loving with the depth and breadth of the love of God. And it was this perfected Spirit of His that He promised to give to His Church.

But "grace," as Pascal reminds us, is not "glory," but only itself a symbol and fore-

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 11.

shadowing of the glory to follow.[1] We have the treasure in earthen vessels (2 Cor. iv. 7) and the treasure we have is but an instalment of the promised inheritance (i. 22). If we love Him and keep His commandments He will, as St. John says, make His abode with us and make us the sons of God; but it is not until He appears, and we see Him as He is, that we shall be like Him. "Amor gratia, contemplatio gloria."[2]

Our second question can be more briefly answered. Where is He who makes us this promise? He alone can give the answer: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." If that is so, if the eternal world is all about us—if "the heavenly places" where our Lord sits at God's right hand, waiting to bless us "with every spiritual blessing,"[3] are close at hand, only veiled from our eyes—what we need, and all that we need, is to break through this obscuring veil by an

[1] "La grâce est la figure de la gloire, car elle n'est pas la dernière fin. Elle a été figurée par la loi, et elle figure elle même la gloire; mais de telle manière qu'elle est en même temps un moyen pour y arriver."—*Pensées*, II. ix. 3.

[2] Andrewes, *Preces*. p. 345 Pickering's ed. [3] Eph. i. 3.

act of faith, and so come into the presence of Christ. Such an ever-open door into the eternal world Christ has provided in the Sacraments.

So it was, St. Paul reminds us, with the Church in the wilderness: "I would not have you ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual Rock that followed them: and the Rock was Christ. Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased."

The apostle was thinking, we cannot doubt, of that great text in the Book of Deuteronomy (viii. 3) which our Lord had in mind during His Temptation in the wilderness: "He humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." He was thinking too, perhaps, of that place

in Exodus (xvii. 6, 7) where the command was given to strike the rock to bring forth water: "Behold I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?"

"Is the Lord among us, or not?" That was the question of questions for them, as it is still for us. Of what spiritual use was their baptism in cloud and sea, if it kindled no faith in the God who guided their passage? "Doth man live by bread alone?" Of what spiritual profit was it to have been kept from hunger and thirst in the wilderness by the gathering of manna and by water springing from the rock unless the purpose of God to carry them to the promised land was ever in their view? The food was but light food indeed, whatever it was; and the water was but scanty. There was better food and more plentiful drink in Egypt. But, if this "table in the wilderness" had been

recognised and acknowledged with thankfulness as the direct gift of God, the symbol of his Divine Presence, and the proof of His loving care, it would have been to all the congregation, as it was to Moses and Joshua and Caleb, spiritual food and drink—that is to say, food and drink for their spirits; for they would have grown in the knowledge of God and in the love of God.

One thing, then, is plain, and for the simple it may suffice—that the Sacraments bring us grace by bringing us into the very Presence of the Author of all grace. They bring us out of our ordinary world into the spiritual world where Christ is, and where we might always be if our faith were stronger. It is but climbing a few steps, and we may be there, on a Mount of Transfiguration, where the Master stands ready to bless us with that blessing which is the gift of Himself. The question for each of us is, Have we faith enough in His real Presence to take that step, and so find His Presence and blessing for ourselves?

II

BAPTISM

Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.—1 Cor. x. 1. 2

The New Testament has its roots in the Old, and cannot be understood apart from it. And so, in order to understand what is meant by the Christian Sacraments, we shall be wise to begin by looking back to see what was in the mind of the apostles when they admitted new brethren into the Christian Church by the one solemn rite, and met together as a brotherhood to celebrate the other. In the present lecture we shall be considering Baptism alone, and Baptism only as it was practised in Apostolic times, leaving for that which follows the consideration of infant Baptism and its relation to Confirmation.

The significance of Baptism is not far to

seek. People and things are washed in order to cleanse them. When defilement has been contracted by touching any object physically unclean, the obvious remedy is to wash; and it requires but a slight extension of thought to prescribe washing as the symbolic remedy for ceremonial uncleanness (Num. xix. 11).[1] This would explain the use of baptism at the reception of Jewish converts from heathendom,

[1] *Cf.* E. Caird, *Lay Sermons*: "Cleanliness at a special stage of the religious life of mankind was not only next to godliness, but we might almost say it was godliness. To civilised man it was an important step on the upward way when he learnt to show his reverence for his God by ceremonial ablutions, and to consider himself unfit to approach the shrine unless he had removed every vestige of uncleanness from his person and his garments. With such purification he seemed to put off his baser and commoner self, to free himself from all debasing contacts, and to prepare himself for entering into closer relations with the Divine. Nor can we regard this as simply an illusion of superstition. For, in the first place, as Goethe tells us, reverence for that which is above us is the root out of which all respect for others and for ourselves must spring; and the cleansing that begins in the sanctuary will not stop until it has been extended to the whole life. And, in the second place, the outward symbol is already a part, and no inconsiderable part, of the reality it symbolises" (p. 207). We are told that "living" water was supposed to be itself possessed of divine qualities. See *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 126, 168.

a practice from which Christian Baptism ultimately derives ; and it is interesting to learn that the Rabbis employed the metaphor of "a new birth" to describe the incorporation of the new member into the holy people. A further and less obvious step, due to prophetic teaching, was taken when moral offences were classed along with ceremonial offences as shutting men out from God's presence. For then you have the longing expressed for an inward washing, which should do for a man's spirit what clean water did for his body. "Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." And along with the human desire you have the Divine promise of fulfilment. "In that day," says Zechariah (xiii. 1)—the day of the Christ—"there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" ; and so Isaiah (iv. 3) : "It shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion shall be called holy, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth"—*i.e.* the sin—"of the daughters of Zion" ; and so, too, Ezekiel (xxxvi. 25) : "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." But Ezekiel carries the thought one step further.

Washing removes defilement, but, as defilement recurs, there must be renewed washing; and so it must be with sin. Repentance may meet with forgiveness, but there will be repetition of the sin unless the inner principle of action can be changed. Therefore, Ezekiel adds the explicit promise, not only "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," but "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."

It was with these prophecies in mind that John the Baptist, when he announced the approach of Messiah's kingdom, distinguished between his own function and that of the Christ. He called men to repent, and, on repentance, he baptized them, as a symbol of forgiveness. But the gift of the new principle it was not in his power to bestow. He was but the King's herald, going before Him to prepare His way. It was for the Christ Himself, anointed with God's Spirit, and for Him alone, to minister that Divine Spirit to men. "I baptize with water; he shall baptize with the Holy Spirit." In these words John prophetically indicated the distinguishing character of Christian Baptism; it was to be a

Baptism that brought not only forgiveness for the past, but grace for the future.

Christian Baptism, therefore, has essentially two sides: it looks backward and it looks forward. This double aspect is clearly brought out by St. Paul's reference in the passage chosen for our text, where the apostle compares the Christian Sacraments with certain types under the Old Covenant. "All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." The passage of the Red Sea separated the Israelites from the life of slavery in Egypt, and so became a symbol of the leaving behind for ever of the old life; but a new life lay in front, the life of a nation in covenant with God through the mediatorship of His servant Moses, and of this new life the symbol was the pillar of cloud, which was to lead the people through the sea and the wilderness into the promised land.

Now, some little confusion has arisen in the interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles from the fact that though it is possible to speak of Baptism "by water and spirit," as St. Paul speaks of the Israelites being baptized "in the

cloud and in the sea," there was only one symbol of this Sacrament under the New Covenant. Hence the double side of Christian Baptism (which is of its essence) is not always emphasised ; and, in consequence, some scholars have asserted the paradox that Baptism is concerned only with the washing away of sins, and that the gift of the Holy Spirit is conferred by a separate rite. Let us look briefly at one or two passages which describe the Baptisms of the Apostolic Church.

1. After hearing St. Peter's sermon at Pentecost those who were pricked in their heart said, " Brethren, what shall we do ? " and Peter replied, " Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, *and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" And the narrative goes on : " They then that received his word were baptized ; and there were added to them in that day about three thousand souls " (Acts ii. 41).

It seems to me impossible to read this verse without drawing the conclusion that St. Luke, when he says these three thousand were baptized, implies that they received in baptism

what St. Peter had expressly promised them, namely "the gift of the Holy Ghost." We may suspect also, as it was the wonderfulness of the Pentecostal signs that had attracted them, that these were repeated in their own case, as a pledge to assure them of the Spirit's presence. But however that may have been, this emphatic use, on so striking an occasion and after St. Peter's promise, of the words "they were baptized," without any mention of the gift of the Spirit, is the strongest proof that this gift was held to be of the essence of Christian Baptism.

2. Take next the story of Cornelius (Acts x.). The striking feature of the baptism of this proselyte is that while St. Peter was still in the middle of his address the Holy Spirit fell on the company, and "they spake with tongues, and magnified God." "Then Peter said, Can any one forbid the water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." In this place again, St. Peter clearly recognises that the gift of the Spirit was the characteristic feature of Christian Baptism, creating the new

life; and so by implication bringing forgiveness for the past. When he narrates these events to the Church at Jerusalem, he says: "I remembered the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" (xi. 16).

3. But, on the other hand, if this is so—if Christian Baptism was understood to bring with it the gift of the Holy Spirit—what are we to say to the story of the Samaritans baptized by Philip the Evangelist, of whom we are expressly told that when the apostles Peter and John came to Samaria, "they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus"? If these words are to be taken literally, we should have to conclude that Baptism, as St. Philip the Evangelist administered it, lacked its main essential. The simplest explanation is that given by Dr. Hort, that what is called in this and some other passages "receiving the Holy Spirit" meant receiving a visible sign of the Spirit's presence.[1]

[1] This is the explanation given by St. Chrysostom. Com-

He says: "The recognition of Samaritans as the members of the Christian community, hitherto exclusively Jewish, was so important a step outwards from the first (and now by long custom established) state of things, that the apostles evidently shrank from giving full and unreserved welcome to the new converts, unless they could obtain a conspicuous Divine sanction, what is called in this book 'receiving the (or a) Holy Spirit.'"[1] Accordingly, we must believe that they joined in a solemn act of prayer for the welfare of their new brethren, especially asking that they might lack no gift which was enjoyed by the rest of the Church.

And what St. Peter did at Samaria St. Paul on a no less interesting occasion did at Ephesus in regard to some disciples of the Baptist whom

menting on the words, "They prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost," he says: "And yet great signs had been done: how then had they not received the Spirit? They had received the Spirit—namely, of remission of sins; but the spirit of miracles they had not received. For to show that this was the case, and that it was the spirit of miracles they had not received, observe how, having seen the result, Simon came and asked for this" (Homily on Acts).

[1] *The Christian Ecclesia*, p. 54.

he met there. They had not heard about the Holy Spirit being given to men, having been baptized only with the Baptism of John.[1] But St. Paul having explained the difference between the two Baptisms had them baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And then he

[1] The attitude of the pious Israelite to the baptism of John may be inferred from a Messianic passage in one of the so-called "Psalms of Solomon" (xviii. 6), written just before the Christian era, which speaks of a cleansing preparatory to the Christ's advent. The following translation and text are from Ryle and James (Cambridge Press):

"The LORD cleanse Israel for the day when he shall have mercy upon them and shall bless them: even for the day of his appointing, when he shall bring back his anointed.

"Blessed are they that shall be in those days: for they shall see the goodness of the LORD, which he shall bring to pass for the generation that cometh!

"Under the rod of the chastening of the Lord's anointed in the fear of his God: in the wisdom of the spirit and of righteousness and of might.

"To direct every man in the works of righteousness with the fear of God: to stablish them all in the fear of the LORD."

Καθαρίσαι ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ εἰς ἡμέραν ἐλέου ἐν εὐλογίᾳ,
εἰς ἡμέραν ἐκλογῆς ἐν ἀνάξει χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ.
μακάριοι οἱ γινόμενοι ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις
ἰδεῖν τὰ ἀγαθὰ κυρίου, ἃ ποιήσει γενεᾷ τῇ ἐρχομένῃ,
ὑπὸ ῥάβδον παιδείας χριστοῦ κυρίου ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ αὐτοῦ,
ἐν σοφίᾳ πνεύματος καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ ἰσχύος,
κατευθῦναι ἄνδρα ἐν ἔργοις δικαιοσύνης φόβῳ θεοῦ,
καταστῆσαι πάντας αὐτοὺς ἐν φόβῳ κυρίου.

laid his hands on them, and it is said "the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied" (Acts xix. 6).

We must not from these two solitary instances draw the conclusion that "the laying-on of hands" was in Apostolic times a regular accompaniment of Baptism. Of that there is no other evidence,[1] and clearly both occasions were exceptional. Still less must we infer that the gift invoked by such imposition was the indwelling presence of the Spirit, which the Ethiopian Eunuch on this theory would have been allowed to lack while the Samaritans obtained it. The context in each case suggests that it was some special gift of the Spirit, such as prophecy or speaking with tongues, which, apart from the wonder of the gift itself, was a pledge that the Spirit had been given. We must further note that in the Epistles of St. Paul the imposition of hands is nowhere associated with Baptism, while no one is more emphatic than he in teaching that the special characteristic of Christian Baptism is the gift

[1] The exegesis of Heb. vi. 2, "the doctrine of baptisms [or washings], and of laying on of hands," is too uncertain at present to allow of this passage being brought into evidence.

of the indwelling Spirit. We proceed then to inquire what St. Paul's doctrine of Baptism is.

1. Baptism is to St. Paul, first and foremost, the door of the Christian Church, the pledge and means to Christian unity. In our text he is comparing the two Churches of the Old and New Covenant. The "Church in the wilderness," to use St. Stephen's expression, was constituted through its Baptism in the Red Sea and the pillar of cloud, becoming a holy people in covenant with God. So Christian Baptism admits to the Christian Church. A baptized Christian is essentially a member of the Church of the New Covenant. He lives his life in an organised community which gives him rights and entails duties—a community with laws and principles and ideas of its own, which it exists to exemplify and carry out, and which distinguish it from other societies.

2. But, according to St. Paul, not only does Baptism admit, as by an initiatory rite, into the society of the New Covenant, it at the same time conveys to the new member the qualifications for membership in that society. The Church is a society of men, united in the Spirit of Jesus; and Baptism, while it admits

a man to this society, also fits him for it by bringing him into union with the Spirit of Jesus. Of course, there is no suggestion of any magic in the Baptism. The neophyte is prepared by repentance for his past errors and faith in what he has been told of the power of the risen Lord, and in answer to his faith the Spirit is given. We must not forget either term of the truth. In one place St. Paul lays the stress on faith, in another on grace. "Ye are all sons of God *through faith* in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as *were baptized* into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). Faith, then, is the all-important element in Baptism. Yes, from the human point of view, it is the one all-important element.[1] The new Christian accepts Jesus as Lord. He has a will to obey Him, a desire that the new humanity of Christ may become his. But then in so far as that life does become his, it is not through his own desire and will, left to themselves, but through the Spirit of Christ. And so St. Paul

[1] We may compare what St. Peter says as to the saving power of Baptism, which consists, not in "putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the appeal of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. iii. 21).

reminds his converts. It was "in one Spirit," the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that we were all baptized into one body. Baptism, then, implies a gift to the new disciple as well as faith in the new disciple. St. Paul appeals again and again to the experience of the brethren as to the reality of this gift of the Spirit, the chief proof being the new sense of sonship to God that it brought with it. You did not receive, he reminds them, a spirit like the old spirit of slavish fear; you received a spirit of sonship, by which you cried to God as "Father." You received coincidently a new spirit of love to the brethren, which bore itself witness in all manner of works of mutual service. There was a change of personality. It was found possible to catalogue a list of deeds characteristic of the old nature, and a similar list characteristic of the new—works of the flesh and works of the spirit—and the new nature was the nature of Jesus Christ, who is the 'New Man." Hence St. Paul does not scruple to call the Church "the Body of Christ," as being the scene of the operation of the Spirit —individual Christians being, as it were, the limbs of the body, which share in the life of

the whole, and have each his proper function to perform.

3. There is one important effect of this "putting on of Christ" in Baptism which must not be passed over without special emphasis, and that is the forgiveness of past sin. This was, of course, the most obvious of all the ideas conveyed by the baptismal rite, as it was to the man who found the burden of his past life intolerable its supreme benefit. So to St. Paul himself at the moment of his conversion this must have been its greatest comfort. "Arise," says Ananias to him, "and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts xxii. 16). But it was only when Baptism was viewed not only as the Sacrament of repentance, but as the Sacrament of the new nature of Christ given to the repentant sinner, that the forgiveness of sins could become a reality to him. St. Paul, in the eighth chapter of Romans, tells us that in his own experience the conflict between the sinful passions and the delight in the law of God was only terminated by "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" which freed him from "the law of sin and death." And so, if

we ask for the rationale of the forgiveness of sins in Christian Baptism, the answer is that "we were buried with Christ through Baptism into death, that we might walk in newness of life." The old sins are ours no longer, for the old nature is dead. "It is no longer I that live," says St. Paul, "but Christ that liveth in me." We are made righteous, therefore, by receiving into ourselves the Righteous One. "We are justified by his life-blood."

George Fox tells us in his Journal how this truth came home to him in a vision. He was at a meeting of "professors" (as he calls them), and they were discoursing of the Blood of Christ; and "as they were discoursing of it, I saw," he says, "through the immediate opening of the invisible Spirit, the Blood of Christ. And I cried out among them and said, 'Do ye not see the Blood of Christ, see it in your hearts, to sprinkle your hearts and consciences from dead works to serve the living God?' For I saw it, the Blood of the New Covenant, how it came into the heart." Baptism, then, could not be the Sacrament of the forgiveness of sin if it were not also the Sacrament of the indwelling Spirit which brings to us the new life.

4. But, while the facts of daily experience in the Apostolic Church enabled St. Paul to maintain that the Church was the very Body of Christ and that members baptized into it did actually "put on Christ" and so become "a new creation" with their old nature and all its sins dead and buried, he was constrained also to admit that the Christian life, as it was actually lived in the various communities, did not always fill out the perfection of the ideal. He himself could speak of Baptism as a death and burial with Christ, and assuredly it had been so in his own case. If any man ever walked in "newness of life" after his conversion that man was St. Paul. But to others he had to hold up this meaning of Baptism rather as their profession and ideal than as an account of what had perfectly taken place. "You are dead to sin. *Let not, therefore, sin reign* in your mortal bodies; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness, but yield yourselves unto God" (Rom. vi. 12). It followed that whatever the actual degree of change wrought at Baptism, in whatever measure the Spirit of Christ had been received (and may we not say that this measure of grace

must have been according to the measure in which faith in each case made its self-offering?), there needed always a constant reinforcement of Spirit within every member of the body from Him who was the fountain of Spirit. And so we find St. Paul straining his metaphor of the body and its members to get this necessary truth also expressed. In the Epistle to the Ephesians he represents Christ not only as the Spirit animating the whole body, but as the Head, the Source of new supplies of Spirit, and he bids each and all "Hold fast the Head." That consideration, however, belongs rather to the other Sacrament, except so far as this, that if it were said that a man's sins could not be forgiven unless the principle of sin were at once and wholly destroyed, St. Paul would have replied that as long as the principle of faith was active and the limb was in full communion with the head, God was justified in seeing the end in the beginning, the full salvation in the struggling process, and in "imputing" to each member the righteousness of the Head which should one day be his.

5. Once more, the recollection of the great truth that, although salvation is by grace, faith

also has its part to play, and does not play the same strenuous part in each individual believer, will help us to see our way to the reconciliation of a controversy which has arisen in the Church as to what is implied by the term "regeneration" in Baptism. On the one hand we are told, as by Dr. Mozley,[1] that regeneration cannot be anything less than the spiritual state which is elsewhere described as "salvation," a state of actual, active goodness and holiness. The regenerate man is he who has passed from death to life, from the power of Satan unto God. On the other hand we are told that to say this is to confuse "regeneration" with "conversion"; and that regeneration is only, as it were, the implanting of the seed of Christian life, only the grafting of the old nature on a new stock, that it but puts at our disposal powers and gifts of the eternal world which, nevertheless, we may perhaps never use. We may suspect that this teaching was framed to cover the practice of infant Baptism, which must necessarily be, in some respects, a different thing from the Baptism of those who

[1] *A Review of the Baptismal Controversy*, by J. B. Mozley, D.D. (Longmans).

can exercise repentance and faith. But in this lecture we are concerned only with Bible doctrine; and if we go to the Bible for our doctrine of Baptism we must admit that on the Divine side it is the Sacrament of regeneration, and on the human side the Sacrament of conversion. The Bible does not separate between the two. Baptism is given only to repentance and faith, which together make up conversion, and when so given it is the power of God to salvation by enabling the repentant believer to "put on Christ."

I must not stay to show this at any length, but to my own mind the most emphatic evidence is afforded by our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus about "the new birth," in which He tells him that the Spirit, like the wind, is known by its voice, and that he who has been born of the Spirit shows it by deed and word. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, *and thou hearest the sound thereof.*" Our Lord can intend no difference between the condition of entering the kingdom as He lays it down to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again," and the condition as He lays it down to the Twelve, "Except ye be converted and become

as little children," or else one or other must have been denied a great truth. We find also that the tests which St. John gives of being "born of God" are "to do righteousness" and "to love." "Every one that loveth is born of God"; "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of God" (1 John ii. 29; iv. 7). I have already reminded you of St. Paul's doctrine in many passages; but if, for one more example, we turn to the only place in which he uses the actual word "regeneration" (Titus iii. 5), we find that regeneration is there described not as a possibility of righteousness, but as a state in contrast to an old state of evil living. "We also"—we who are now saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost—"were aforetime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another." There is no hint, then, in the Bible of any distinction between the state of regeneration and that of conversion; ideally they are the two sides, Divine and human, of the same state of salvation. Practically, however, there were differences between the state of Christian and Christian

according as each put forth his faith ; and there are still such differences ; and if we remember that, we may consent to the use of the word "regeneration," as it is used in our Prayer-book as an equivalent for "grafting into the body of Christ's Church," it being recognised that by this is implied free access to the regenerating Spirit of Christ.

In conclusion, let me add a word about the formula of administration—an antiquarian question, but not uninteresting. In the Acts of the Apostles we are told that converts were baptized "in the name of Christ," or "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts x. 48, xix. 5); and this would *primâ facie* seem to imply the use of these or equivalent words in the baptismal formula. We can understand that our present formula "in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit" might not have presented a clear enough sense to the catechumens of the first age, whose instruction for the most part followed Baptism instead of, as later, preceding it. So, again, when St. Paul asks the Corinthians, "Was Paul crucified for you, or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" the implication is surely that the Corinthians had been baptized

in the name of One who had been crucified for them—viz. Jesus Christ. But in that case what are we to say of the verse at the close of St. Matthew's Gospel, which seems to give a clear direction, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"?

We have two alternatives. Either we may recognise that what our Lord was giving in this command was not a baptismal formula—and we have no other instance of His giving a formula—but a summary of the faith that was to be taught—"This is your faith—faith in the Triune God—teach it and baptize"; or else we may allow that our present text of this verse in St. Matthew is not in its original form, recognising what scholars tell us, that the language of St. Matthew's Gospel, "where it does not exactly reproduce an earlier document, shows traces of modification of a later kind."[1] In either case the formula, as soon as it was adopted—and this must have been at an early date, for it is prescribed in the *Didache*[2]—would

[1] Robinson, "Baptism," *Enc. Bibl.*, p. 474.

[2] This earliest known directory of worship, dated by

become an eloquent reminder to the catechumen that the Church into which he was being admitted was a heavenly sphere, bringing him into a new relation with the Eternal Godhead. To the disciple who makes confession that Jesus is Lord it might seem enough to receive Baptism in the name of the Lord whom he has confessed; but the Church would have him remember that, as his confession would have been impossible but for the convincing power of the Holy Spirit, so his future life must depend upon that Spirit's indwelling; and also that the redemption which he thankfully acknowledges would have been impossible but for the love of the Father, who gave His Son. We can understand therefore how, just as St. Paul summed up the benefits he hoped for his disciples in the threefold blessing, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all," so the Church would wish to place the threefold Name on its members at their first entrance into the Christian life.

Lightfoot between A.D. 80—110, was discovered in 1873, and first printed ten years later. English editions have appeared, edited by Taylor, Bigg, Schaff, etc.

III

INFANT BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.—St. Matt. vii. 7.

As we find the doctrine of Baptism in the pages of Scripture, it is as simple as it is deep. The disciple by his Baptism is admitted into a society the distinction of which is that its pervading spirit is the Holy Spirit of Christ and of God. This Spirit animates every true member, and it is this Spirit which each new adherent receives at his Baptism, as he acknowledges that "Jesus is Lord." In the first age the presence of the Spirit was sometimes attested by remarkable powers, such as prophecy, gifts of healing, "speaking in a tongue"; so that the community learned to have faith in itself as it had faith in its Lord.

The ideal held up before it was a high one, and the response was high, as we can see from its early records preserved in the Acts of the Apostles; although, as those records and St. Paul's letters also testify, there were not wanting the evidences of human infirmity.

The first question that lies before us in this lecture is how far we are justified in transferring the language of Scripture about Baptism to that rite as it is administered in our own Church, under present conditions. And the first thing that strikes us is that so soon as we turn to the Mission-field we seem back in apostolic times, and Baptism occupies the place we see it occupy in the Apostolic Church. It is given to repentance and faith; it marks a breach with an evil past, and an acceptance of the salvation of Christ; it admits to the communion of the faithful, and brings with it the joy and peace of reconciliation with God. Again, when children in Christian England have been brought up without a knowledge of the faith, and on reaching years of discretion seek instruction, and, becoming persuaded that with Christ is the "well of life," seek admission to His Church, there is nothing in our Office for

Adult Baptism that conflicts with what we read in the Acts or Epistles; we seem to be but following apostolic custom in admitting them to the fold through the door of Baptism.

But how is it with our normal practice of baptizing infants? Are not those Christians justified who insist that Infant Baptism, as it lacks necessarily the Apostolic pre-requisite of repentance and faith, must be an entirely different thing from the Apostolic Baptisms? In attempting an answer to this question, let us first examine what justification we can find for Infant Baptism in the pages of Scripture.

We may admit at once that there are no precepts enjoining it. The problem must have arisen both in the Church at Jerusalem and in the Churches of Gentile Christians during the period covered by the Apostolic Epistles; but, whatever the practice was, it must have been thoroughly understood, and must have generally commended itself, for no question seems to have been raised about it, or at least it has left no trace in the extant literature. Can we, then, in default of definite information, conjecture what would have been the natural view for the Apostles to take of the relation

of infants to the new religious community? We have one thing to guide us, and that is the view that they took of the relation of infants to the Old Covenant. The privileges of the Jewish people depended upon the acknowledgment of Jehovah as the only God, and the acceptance of His commandments. The symbol of this acknowledgment and acceptance—the seal of their faith—was the rite of circumcision. But whereas among many ancient peoples circumcision (which, like Baptism, was a widespread custom) was practised as a symbol of initiation to the privileges of manhood when a child reached puberty, among the Jews it was conferred at eight days old. That is to say, the Jewish boy was admitted to the Covenant as the son of his father, consecrated to God (by His grace) from the womb, and was then taught his obligations, as he could learn them; a parental duty upon which the Book of Deuteronomy is very emphatic. That this was St. Paul's view of the status of Christian children is made plain by an *obiter dictum* in 1 Cor. vii. 14, where the Apostle is speaking of the relation of husband and wife in cases where only one was a

Christian. "The unbelieving husband," he says, "is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." In this passage "we are plainly taught of God," says Hooker (V. lx. 6), "that the seed of faithful parentage is holy from the very birth." And what is meant by "holiness" in this case? In Scripture the word has two senses: 1. "Perfect" or "sinless," as when it is said by God, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (Lev. xix. 2); 2. Consecrated to God, as when Israel is spoken of as a chosen race and a holy nation (1 Pet. ii. 9). Evidently the latter is the only sense in which holiness can be ascribed to infants; and so we must understand St. Paul to say that the children of a Christian parent are reckoned among the people of God.

May we argue, then, from the analogy of circumcision, that Baptism was administered to infants in the apostolic age as a seal and pledge of their position within the Covenant? We may argue that it might legitimately have been so administered; but on the question of fact there are other considerations to which

we must give weight, the chief of which is that our Lord's command to baptize, as we have it in the close of St. Matthew's Gospel, was a command to "make disciples" of the "nations" by this means, so that Baptism may have been originally regarded as a rite intended only for the first generation of believers, their children being held to be within the Covenant. This supposition would give point to the peculiar phrasing of Rom. vi. 3 and Gal. iii. 27: "So many of us as were baptized." Certainly the parallel that would most readily present itself to the minds of Jewish Christians would be that of the baptism of proselytes. Proselytes were baptized, and perhaps any children they had before admission to the Jewish Church were also baptized, but not those born afterwards; these were born "in holiness" (Edersheim, ii. 743). The baptized "households" of which we read in the Acts, such as those of Lydia and the jailor at Philippi, may well have included infants, but these were not the children of believers. On the question of fact, therefore, we must suspend judgment. And we may note that the earliest Church manual that has come down to us—the *Didache*—contains no recogni-

tion of infant Baptism. There is a direction that the baptized person shall fast the day before Baptism—a thing, for infants, out of the question. But although we cannot prove that Baptism was, as a matter of fact, administered to infants in the Apostolic Church, we can see that, at whatever date the Baptism of infants was introduced into the Church, there was justification for the practice in St. Paul's doctrine of Baptism as "the circumcision of the Christ" (Col. ii. 11).

We must now go on to inquire how St. Paul's teaching about Baptism will apply to the case of infants. Obviously we cannot transfer every expression that St. Paul uses about the experience of men and women in Baptism to the case of unconscious infants. But for both adults and infants Baptism is the rite of admission to the Church, and so to the influences of the Holy Spirit; for both it is the pledge of adoption into the Divine sonship; and if the root idea of St. Paul's teaching be kept in mind, that in Baptism the Saviour gives Himself to the disciple's faith, and (we must believe) in proportion to the disciple's faith—for this was our Lord's teaching in the days

of His flesh, where we see how great faith received great blessing, while little faith found itself at a loss—then, without debating the scholastic question whether infants have a *motus fidei*, even as a grain of mustard-seed, we may justify the bringing of our children to Christ in the way He has ordained at the earliest moment in order that from the first faith and grace may grow together. It is important to notice how careful the Christian Church has been, in taking the responsibility of baptizing infants, to prevent Baptism from being regarded as a mere charm, or piece of magic, by requiring sponsors, or god-parents, to profess the child's faith and guarantee his Christian training. The Church's faith, professed by these representatives,[1] was reasonably imputed to the children, because it was presently to be implanted in them by their care. And in so doing the Church is but following the Lord's example, who recognised and blessed the faith of the parents and friends of those whom He healed in body and soul, as being a warrant

[1] St. Augustine, in his letter to Boniface, treats at length of sponsors, and lays it down that they are the representatives of the whole Church. The use of sponsors was not restricted to the Baptism of infants.

for the faith of those whom they brought to Him (St. Mark ii. 5, ix. 24).

Accordingly our own Office of Infant Baptism rests this practice not merely upon the authority of Church custom and tradition, but upon the authority of Scripture by pleading the action of our Saviour Himself in blessing little children. It reads from St. Mark's Gospel[1] the story of our Lord's anger at the children being refused admission to Him, and calls attention to His gracious words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," bidding us not doubt, but earnestly believe, that He will likewise favourably receive our own children, and embrace them with the arms of His mercy. The argument is surely a valid one,[2] for

[1] The Sarum Manual, in the "Ordo ad faciendum catechumenum," contains the parallel passage from St. Matthew. The substitution was made apparently because of the vivid and touching details in St. Mark's narrative.

[2] Tertullian did not think so. "The Lord says, indeed, 'Forbid them not to come unto me.' Let them come, then, when they are of riper years; let them come when they are disciples, when they are taught whither they are coming; let them become Christians when they are able to know Christ" (*Of Baptism*, viii.).

our Lord's words imply that coming to Him to ask for His blessing, and claiming admission to the kingdom of heaven, are one and the same thing (*cf.* John v. 40). And this passage of the Gospel, further, must be allowed to justify the institution of god-parents. For whatever may have been the exact nature of the blessing conferred by Christ on these children—and it must have included intercession for them to the Father that they might realise their Divine sonship—we can see that in this realisation the parents and friends who brought them had a part to play. The babes—so St. Luke calls them—would know nothing of what had been done to them, the older children would soon forget ; but the memory of that solemn blessing, if it were recalled to them as the years passed over, must have become, through all their future life, a pillar of cloud in the hot day of temptation and a pillar of fire in the day of darkness and perplexity.

There is one difficulty which every one must feel who hears this Gospel read, with our Lord's emphatic statement, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," or who remembers St. Paul's

saying, "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," and who compares them with the words of our Catechism, which speaks of the children of Christians as being "by nature born in sin and the children of wrath." How can these apparently contradictory statements be reconciled? The explanation must lie in the words "by nature," which mean "by nature, without grace," "by themselves apart from God." To us, the parents, and—I would dare to say—in the eyes of Christ, our children are not merely natural; nay, may we not say that what Christ has done by His redemption has so permeated not only His Church, but the world, that much of human nature is no longer merely natural? We Christians bring our children to Christ as early as we can, so that He may seal them for His own; but, as Keble says:

> Draw near as early as we may,
> Grace, like an angel, goes before.

The children of Christians are, as a fact, not merely children of nature, though, apart from Christ, they must be so. For consider two children—one born in a Christian home and

one in a home without the fear of God, and let each so continue. You have once more realised that contrast of states described by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians (ii. 3), on which the description in our Catechism is based: "We also once lived in the desires of our flesh, doing the will of our own flesh, and our impulses, and being in our nature children of wrath even as the rest; but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, quickened us together with Christ." Born, then, into a wrath-filled world, our children are lifted in Baptism into the grace-quickened family of God.

We pass on now to consider the rite of Confirmation. And in Confirmation we have, to those who believe in the Church as a living body, a rite of even greater interest than that of Infant Baptism, because it is, even more certainly, an adaptation of the earliest Christian practice to fresh needs. The laying-on of hands was among the Jews a traditional action accompanying solemn prayer and benediction, and it was adopted in the Christian Church in many different circumstances. It was used at the ordination and commission of Church

officers (Acts vi. 6, xiii. 3, 1 Tim. iv. 14), at the reconciliation of penitents (1 Tim. v. 22), in healing the sick (Acts ix. 12; St. Mark xvi. 18), and in invoking special gifts of the Holy Spirit, what Hooker calls "miraculous operations" (Acts viii. 17, xix. 6). Its subsequent history in connexion with Baptism falls into three stages.

1. As Baptism had two sides--the surrender of the old nature and the putting on of the new—and as our Lord had spoken of being born "of water and the Spirit," very early in the history of the Church the symbol of laying-on of hands was added to the symbol of washing as part of the rite of initiation into the Church in order to bring out clearly both sides of the truth. The earliest mention of this use of imposition of hands as a part of Baptism is found in Tertullian at the end of the second century; it is not referred to in the description of Baptism either in the *Didache* or in Justin Martyr. "After this, having come out from the bath," says Tertullian, "we are anointed thoroughly with the blessed unction. Next to this, the hand is laid upon us, calling upon and inviting the Holy Spirit through

the blessing."[1] The unction here referred to, also for the first time, became the corresponding symbol of the Spirit in the Eastern Church, where we have hardly any mention of the laying-on of hands.

2. A second stage in the history was reached when the earlier practice of deferring Baptism till Easter was given up, so that it became advisable to separate the two parts of the rite, and reserve the laying-on of hands for the Bishop. In this way a short interval became customary between the Baptism proper and the Invocation of the Spirit.

"Gradually," says Dean Plumptre,[2] "especially in Western Europe, the negligence or the secular engagements of the Bishop prolonged this interval. The East, however, with its characteristic reverence for antiquity, refused to separate what the primitive Church had joined, and infant Baptism, infant Confirmation, infant Communion follow, in its practice, in immediate sequence. Even in the Roman Church the Sacramentaries of Gelasius and Gregory unite the first two ordinances.

[1] *Of Baptism*, viii.

[2] "Confirmation," *Dictionary of Antiquities.*

It was not . . . until the thirteenth century, that the two ordinances were permanently separated, and a period of from seven to twelve years allowed to intervene."

3. The third stage, so far as our own Church is concerned, arrived with the Reformation, and it consisted in finding a spiritual use for the interval which had thus come to be usual between Baptism and the laying-on of hands, by definitely fixing the age for the latter rite at "years of discretion," and combining with it a ratification of baptismal vows. Was it justified in this bold course? The answer surely is that in so doing the Reformed Church was virtually going back to apostolical custom and Scriptural principles. For it abandoned the theory that had grown up from the time of Tertullian, that Confirmation (as it came to be called) was an invocation of the baptismal gift of the indwelling Spirit, and saw in it, what it always is in the New Testament, an independent invocation of a special gift of the Spirit for a special purpose. Let us look at what our Church actually did in regard to Confirmation, when it put out its Reformed Prayer-book. This is clearly shown in the

first rubric prefixed to the service, which runs as follows :

"To the end that Confirmation may be ministered to the more edifying of such as shall receive it (according to St. Paul's doctrine, who teacheth that all things should be done in the Church to the edification of the same), it is thought good that none hereafter shall be confirmed, but such as can say in their mother tongue the Articles of the Faith, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments ; and can also answer to such questions of this Short Catechism as the Bishop (or such as he shall appoint) shall by his discretion appose them in. And this order is most convenient to be observed for divers considerations. First, because that when children come to the years of discretion, and have learned what their godfathers and godmothers promised for them in Baptism, they may then themselves with their own mouth, and with their own consent, openly before the Church, ratify and confess the same, and also promise that by the grace of God they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe and keep such things, as they by their own mouth and confession have assented unto. Secondly, forasmuch as Confirmation is ministered to them that be baptized, that by imposition of hands and prayer they may receive strength and defence against all temptations to sin, and the assault of the world

and the devil: it is most meet to be ministered when children come to that age, that, partly by the frailty of their own flesh, partly by the assaults of the world and the devil, they begin to be in danger to fall into sin."

There are three points in this manifesto which are of special importance.

1. It makes an appeal to St. Paul's principle of edification, as the justification for the new use to which it was putting the ancient rite.

2. It defines this new use as an opportunity for young Christians, baptized in infancy, to claim their own status as members of the Church, professing their own faith, and promising their own obedience, as these had been professed and promised for them.

3. It defines the gift asked for in Confirmation as strength and defence against temptations from the world, flesh, and devil.

In accordance with this new view of Confirmation, the Reformed Church made several changes in the service. It introduced a Catechism in order that the candidate might satisfy the Bishop that he held the true Christian faith, and held it with intelligence, that he knew the duties of a Christian, which

he was promising to fulfil, and knew also what prayer meant. At the final Revision in 1661 this Catechism was removed from the service to its present independent position, and there was substituted for it the general question, "Do ye here renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism?"

Secondly, an alteration was made in the prayer for the Confirmation gift. In the mediæval form the petition had been: "Send into them from heaven the sevenfold Spirit, the Holy Paraclete—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of knowledge and piety, the Spirit of counsel and strength."[1] This was changed into "Send down from heaven upon them Thy Holy Ghost the Comforter with the manifold *gifts* of grace," and then these gifts were enumerated as "the spirit of wisdom," etc.—thus bringing the petition more clearly into accord with the Biblical doctrine of "laying-on of hands" as an invocation of spiritual gifts; and in the next edition this prayer was still further changed into "Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O

[1] "Immitte in eos septiformem Spiritum, Sanctum Paraclitum de cælis," etc.

Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts."

Thirdly, the new service omitted the final Collect, which opened with the sentence, "O God, who gavest the Holy Spirit to Thy Apostles, and who by their means didst will that it should be transmitted to their successors and the rest of the faithful"—a form of expression which comes dangerously near to a doctrine which St. Augustine had long ago protested against—that the imposition of hands conveys the Holy Spirit. "None of Christ's disciples," he says, "gave the Holy Spirit. They were wont to pray, indeed, that He might come upon those on whom they laid their hands; they themselves did not bestow Him; and this custom the Church to-day observes." [1]

The best account of the Bible doctrine of Confirmation, if that expression be not a paradox, is given by Hooker in his reply to the Puritan objection that the rite was unscriptural. His defence falls into these four simple and indisputable propositions: Our

[1] *De Trin.*, xv. 26.

means to obtain the graces which God doth bestow are our prayers. Our prayers to that intent are available as well for others as for ourselves. To pray for others is to bless them for whom we pray, because prayer procureth the blessing of God upon them, especially the prayer of natural and spiritual fathers. With prayers of spiritual and personal benediction the manner hath been in all ages to use imposition of hands, as a ceremony betokening our restrained desires to the party whom we present unto God in prayer (V. lxvi. 1).

It follows, therefore, if Confirmation is a prayer, that the special grace given in Confirmation is the special grace asked for—viz. "assistance in all virtue and strength against temptation and sin"; for our Saviour's doctrine of prayer is that as the earthly father will not give a stone for bread or a serpent for a fish, so neither will the Father in heaven refuse any good gift to them that ask Him.

"Grace," says Hooker, as his final word, is "infused into Christian men by degrees; planted in them at the first by Baptism. after

cherished, watered, and strengthened, as by other virtuous offices which piety and true religion teacheth, even so by this very special benediction whereof we speak, the rite or ceremony of Confirmation."

IV

THE EUCHARIST: THE LORD'S OWN TEACHING

Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.—St. John xiii. 1.

We pass in this lecture to consider the second great Sacrament of our salvation, the Supper of the Lord. And in an examination of the Bible doctrine as to this Sacrament I propose to begin by an attempt to elicit, so far as the records permit, the teaching of our Lord Himself, as it was given to His apostles on the occasion of the institution. In the way of such an attempt there is the obvious difficulty that the Synoptic narratives do not agree among themselves as to the exact words used by our Saviour, while St. John, although he

narrates the story of the Last Supper with incidents which he alone gives, omits altogether the institution of the Eucharist. This difficulty, however, is not so great as it appears at first sight, because the critical investigation of the text, while it has separated clearly the several strands of tradition—that of St. Mark (of which St. Matthew is a modification), that of St. Luke (as the text is given in the margin of the Revised Version), and that of St. Paul—has also accounted for most of the divergences between them.[1] In this lecture, for reasons which will appear, I am following St. Luke for the order, and St. Mark for the words, of the institution.

A more serious difficulty arises when we attempt to get behind the words themselves to the presuppositions which must underlie them and supply much of their meaning. There is uncertainty, for example, as to the nature of the Supper at which the Sacrament was instituted. Most people are so accustomed to the definite statement of the Synoptic Gospels in our present texts, that this Supper was the Passover Feast, that they do not

[1] See Robinson, "Eucharist" in *Enc. Bibl.*, p. 1418.

recognise that St. John virtually denies this by his statement that the Last Supper took place "before the Passover." Both cannot be right, and students are coming more and more to the opinion that it is St. John who must be followed for the chronology of the Passion. The chief difficulty in the Synoptic account lies in the fact that if the Last Supper were indeed the Paschal meal, the Crucifixion must have fallen on the feast-day, which would have been, in the eyes of both priests and Pharisees, an intolerable desecration of their most holy festival; while the events leading up to it, such as the despatch of the armed band and the meeting of the Council, would have been no less breaches of the ceremonial law. St. John's account presents no such difficulties, and is consistent with itself throughout. He puts the trial on the day of Preparation, and tells us that because it was the Preparation the Jews would not enter Pilate's palace, as to do so would have made them ceremonially unclean and unable to keep the feast. Also his account of the Supper as taking place before the Passover explains what is so striking in the other accounts—the

absence of all reference to the Paschal lamb.[1] It may be added that St. John's view receives a certain corroboration from the references in St. Paul's Epistles. It has been pointed out that according to St. John's chronology our Lord's death would have taken place at the time when the Passover lambs were sacrificed, and this would give point to St. Paul's identification of Christ with the Paschal lamb—"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast" (1 Cor. v. 6). Whether this was in St. Paul's mind or not, there is no reference in this passage to the Sacrament, and so no identification is suggested of the Sacrament with the Paschal meal. The keeping of the Passover feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth is a metaphor of the Christian life suddenly struck

[1] A short and clear statement of the case will be found in Dr. Sanday's *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel* (pp. 150-55). Without coming to any decided conclusion, he says that "the Synoptic version is too much burdened by contradictions to be taken as it stands." See also two notes in the *Journal of Theological Studies* (July, 1908) by Prof. Burkitt and Mr. Brooke, who have come independently to the conclusion that our Lord's words, in St. Luke xxii. 15, 16 mean that He desired to eat a Passover which after all He was not to eat.

out in the heat of the apostle's zeal against the Corinthian adulterer, from the suggestion of the proverb he had just quoted—"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." St. Paul nowhere refers to the Christian Sacrament in terms borrowed from the Passover Feast. The Mosaic types with which he compares it are the manna and water in the wilderness (1 Cor. x. 3). And the reason for the absence of what seems to us so obvious a comparison may well have been that the Passover still continued to be celebrated by Christian Jews (*cf.* Acts xviii. 21, A.V.), while they "broke bread" among themselves on the Lord's Day. The Sacrament could not, therefore, have been regarded by the apostles themselves as the Christian substitute for the Passover. Accordingly, although we may recognise that Paschal associations came, after the fall of Jerusalem, to gather round the Christian feast—and most naturally and profitably, since Christ was the true Paschal Lamb—we must not interpret the institution of the Lord's Supper as though its symbolism was derived from that of the Paschal Feast.

But if that is so, and it must be so if we

elect to follow St. John, have we any clue as to what the Supper was? For clearly it was a solemn meal, and not the supper of every day. The best suggestion made hitherto[1] is that it was the ceremony of *Kiddûsh*, a "sanctification," or thanksgiving, customarily held before the evening meal at the opening of the Sabbath and the great festivals, in each case with special intention; so that it offered a simple and expressive form capable of adaptation to new circumstances. The parallel between this *Kiddûsh* and the Supper described in the Gospels is very close, for it began with the blessing of the cup, it was followed by a washing of hands—for which it has been suggested that our Lord substituted, as more significant of His ministry, the washing of the disciples' feet (Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*, ii. 497)—and it concluded with the blessing and distribution of the bread. In the Paschal meal itself, though there was a blessing of several cups, the unleavened bread was blessed after, not before, the breaking as being "bread of misery," for "poor people deal in morsels"

[1] "The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist," by G. H. Box, in *Journal of Theological Studies*, iii. 367.

(J. Lightfoot on Matt. xxvi. 27), and each person, it is said, used his own cup, whereas in the *Kiddûsh* a single cup was passed round. Further, the order of the blessings in the *Kiddûsh*, the cup before the bread, corresponds with the order given in St. Luke and with a reference in the First Epistle to the Corinthians—"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" (x. 16)—and also with the account of the Eucharist given in the *Didache*; though not with the account in St. Mark or the formal account given by St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 25). It is not unreasonable to suppose that the order of institution was that of the Jewish ceremony—first the cup and then the bread; but that this order gave way, though less quickly in Jewish churches, to the natural order of thought in the Christian interpretation of the symbols, for we speak of body and blood more naturally than of blood and body (*cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 50; Eph. vi. 12).

If we may assume, then, as seems not improbable, that our Lord grafted His Eucharist or Thanksgiving upon this most simple of

Jewish ceremonial thanksgivings, we must go on to inquire with what new significance He charged it for Christians. It is interesting to put side by side the blessings over the wine and the bread as they are used in the Jewish service—and they may well have been the very blessings used by our Lord—and the blessings as we find them in the earliest Christian service preserved in the *Didache*, for in this way we get the simplest measure of the change. In the Jewish service the double blessing was, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the Vine"; "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who bringest forth bread from the earth." That is to say, it is a thanksgiving for Creation, which precedes and leads up to the particular memorial of Redemption, as the Jew conceived Redemption; just as in our Daily Thanksgiving we begin with "Creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life" before we go on to the "Redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ." In the Christian service of the *Didache* the blessings of Creation have themselves become symbols of Redemption;

and Redemption has its primitive Christian colouring as we find it in the early chapters of the Acts, where the usual way of referring to our Lord is by the Messianic title taken from the fifty-third of Isaiah, "Thy servant Jesus" (Acts iii. 13, 26; iv. 27, 30; R.V. see margin). "First, for the Cup. 'We thank Thee, O our Father, for the Holy Vine of David Thy servant, which Thou hast made known unto us by Thy servant Jesus. Thine be the glory for ever.'" "And for the broken bread, 'We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou hast made known to us by Thy servant Jesus. Thine be the glory for ever.'"

In comparing these blessings with those of the *Kiddûsh* we see how the thanksgiving for corn and wine, which to the Jew were the symbols of all divine blessing, whether in Creation or Redemption—for it is wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and bread that strengtheneth man's heart—was applied in the Christian Church to that greatest of all Divine acts, the Redemption wrought by Christ, a Redemption which was also a new Creation.

For the interpretation of the symbols we

must go to the discourses in St. John's Gospel. The bread is the symbol of life and knowledge, for true life is the knowledge of God (xvii. 3); and the wine is the holy life-blood of the true Vine, which must circulate through all its branches (xv. 5).

There is another idea which must have been in the disciples' mind as they gathered round the table in the upper room, and must also have contributed to the form in which our Lord chose to clothe the memorials of His Passion, and that was the idea of the Messianic Feast, under which (as we learn from the contemporary apocalyptic literature) the Messianic kingdom was looked forward to.[1] In this, as in so many other things, our Lord adopted the popular conception, giving it a higher meaning. Every one will recall His saying, "Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down (*i.e.* at table) with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. viii. 11), as well as the parables of the Wedding Feast and the Ten Virgins. One of the most striking references

[1] The idea was ultimately based on such prophecies as Isa. xxv. 6-8.

to this popular idea is the exclamation of the pious guest in the Pharisee's house, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" (Luke xiv. 15), which called out the parable of the Great Supper, the purport of which was that pious persons were, as a matter of fact, showing little eagerness to eat bread in the kingdom of God, to which they were at the moment actually being summoned. But, for our immediate purpose, the most fruitful references to the Messianic Feast are those in St. Luke's account of the Last Supper. Our Lord says to the Apostles, "I appoint unto you, as my Father hath appointed unto me, a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom"; and, again, He says, at the distribution, "I will not any more eat thereof, or drink of the fruit of the vine, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." This last passage not only declares that the Messianic kingdom, with its feast, is at hand, but brings into relation to it the solemn meal at which the words were spoken, as type to fulfilment. The earthly feast was a pledge and foretaste of that which was to come.

So far, then, we have seen that the Christian Eucharist, as it presented itself to the disciples in the upper chamber, must have been at least this: a thanksgiving over the Divine gifts of bread and wine as symbols of a great act of Redemption soon to be accomplished by the Christ, which was to inaugurate His kingdom.

But what was to be the nature of this Redemption? That was a point upon which, as the Gospels show, the disciples perpetually misunderstood their Master; but it was a point of fundamental importance, and therefore a point upon which He must have intended the feast to enlighten them, and—may we not add (adopting the words in St. Paul's account, "Do this unto My remembrance")?—to enlighten all future generations until His appearing. If we turn, then, to the words of institution, as they are recorded by St. Mark (xiv. 22-24)—for in St. Mark's form they have upon them the unmistakable stamp of originality—we see that the one thing they make luminously clear is that the Messianic redemption involves the death of the Messiah. "The Christ must suffer."

1. Consider this teaching first as our Lord

enshrined it in His words at the giving of the Cup: "Taking a cup, he gave thanks and gave to them, and they all drank of it: and he said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant which is shed on behalf of many." The reference in the words "My Blood of the covenant" is beyond a doubt to the covenant made with Jehovah on Mount Sinai, as it is recorded in Exodus xxiv. 3-8: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments; and all the people answered with one voice, All the words that the Lord hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the mount, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient. And Moses

took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold *the blood of the covenant*, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." In seeking, therefore, an explanation of the words "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many," we learn first from this passage in Exodus that our Lord spoke of Himself as a sacrificial victim, whose life, set free by death, would establish for "many" a covenant with God. And next, if we remember that the Blood of such a holy Victim represented the life of the Deity, which was thus symbolically put upon His worshippers, we shall see in our Lord's words the further truth that His Divine life is sacrificed in order that the life of God (which is His own life) may be in some way shared with them. And once again, if we ask why the cup of wine, symbolising the sacrificial blood, is given them to drink, instead of being sprinkled upon them as in the Mosaic ritual, we shall find the reason in the prophecy of Jeremiah, who said of the "New" Covenant, "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, *I will put my law in their*

inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (xxxi. 33). The Blood, then, of the Christ, which is His life poured out in a reconciling sacrifice, is to become in the most complete way a Divine life within His people.

2. The distribution of the bread follows the giving of the cup, as in sacrifice the feast upon the flesh of the victim followed the offering of the blood. The sacrificial act is thus completed. "Take ye; this is my body." The general idea conveyed by a feast is, of course, that of life and joy: and eternal life and eternal joy in the kingdom of God were the ideas underlying the Messianic Feast. We find not only our Lord Himself but the Jews of His day speaking of the Messianic kingdom under this aspect of "eternal life." We have, for instance, a story in the Gospels of one who came in great haste to ask Him, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark x. 17). Now there was a definite teaching among the Rabbis, as the Lord implies by His answer to this question, that the inheritance of eternal life depended upon keeping the commandments. Hillel used to say "more law, more life." And so St. Peter's confession,

"Thou hast words of eternal life," would be one that came naturally to a Jew. Moreover, the symbolism of eating connected itself easily with the idea of "eternal life" interpreted as the appropriation of the divine will. Ezekiel is commanded to eat the roll of prophecy and then go and speak God's words to the house of Israel (iii. 1). And when in the later Jewish literature the Wisdom of God was personified, the same metaphor of eating is continued: "They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty" (Ecclus. xxiv. 21). Whether this metaphor of eating, in the sense of appropriating instruction, was transferred from the Divine Wisdom to Messiah—*i.e.* whether Messiah was identified with the Wisdom—does not appear certain, though we may note that St. Paul's reference to the water in the wilderness as Messianic is parallel to the Alexandrian interpretation of the manna as the Divine Wisdom.[1] If this were so, the way would have been prepared for our Lord's deeper teaching, that although His words, when appropriated, were indeed

[1] See Sanday, "Jesus Christ," *Hastings*, ii. 637; Robinson, "Eucharist," *Enc. Bibl.*, 1429.

"spirit and life," yet the gift of Himself was more than the gift of His words, being the gift of His whole human nature perfected in self-offering. "Take ye; this is my body."

I will conclude this lecture with a question sometimes asked as to the special grace conferred by each part in this Sacrament, because while we are considering our Lord's own words we can give an authoritative answer. The two sentences, "Take ye; this is my body," "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many," together imply: Under these symbols I give *to* you, what I am giving *for* you—Myself. There is division in the symbol, but not in the gift. And under whatever symbol our Lord speaks of His relation to the Church there is no hint of any partial giving, in this way and in that. "I am the bread of life," He says, meaning the whole stay of all life; and again, "I am the true vine" in whom all branches must inhere. And so, again, when He says, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed," He does not emphasise a distinction between meat and drink which answers to no vital difference, but says in a

figure that He gives Himself to supply all our human needs.[1] Christ, then, is not divided. The believer lives in Christ and Christ in Him. At the same time, though each symbol in this Sacrament does not convey a special grace, it does convey a special message: for every true symbol shows a side of truth which no other can show so well. The mere fact of there being the two symbols in the Eucharist is in itself suggestive, for it implies the separation of the Body and the Blood in sacrificial death, in order that the divine life of Christ may be given to us.

[1] See pp. 17, 18.

V

THE EUCHARIST: THE APOSTOLIC TEACHING

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast.—1 Cor. v. 7.

St. Paul's teaching in regard to the second Christian Sacrament is confined to his First Epistle to the Corinthians; and, like so much of his doctrinal teaching, it is given, not in the way of formal theology, but to meet the particular needs of the Church to which he was writing. The peculiar danger of the Christians at Corinth lay in their magnifying of individual endowments and minifying of social responsibility, which made them the prey of party spirit. Hence the lesson St. Paul has chiefly to urge upon them is that of union among themselves, and he does this by the teaching that the Church is a single whole, breaking down every barrier set up

by race, or status, or individual gift; a single temple of God, built of stones of all shapes and sizes; the single body of Christ, with every variety of member. St. Paul, therefore, in this Epistle, makes his appeal to the Sacraments as to recognisable and indisputable symbols of unity. Of Baptism he says: "In one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and have all been made to drink of one Spirit" (xii. 13). Similarly, he speaks of the other Sacrament chiefly as a "Communion" or "Fellowship," thus giving it a name which it continues to bear in our Church, though without its full significance being always recognised. The simplest way of ascertaining St. Paul's teaching upon this Sacrament will be to take in order the passages in which he makes any reference to it.

1. The first is 1 Cor. x. 1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that . . . our fathers . . . did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual Rock that followed them: and the Rock was Christ. Howbeit with most of them

God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples." The heading of this chapter in the Authorised Version opens with the words, "The Sacraments of the Jews are types of ours," and if that be a true summary of the passage, as I think it is, we can see what St. Paul thought to be one meaning and purpose of this Christian Sacrament by the type with which he compared it. The Church of the Old Covenant made at Sinai had "spiritual meat and drink" in the wilderness, because the manna was a gift from heaven, and the Rock, which gave them their water, was, though they did not realise the truth, Messiah Himself. We see then that the core of St. Paul's teaching about the Eucharist was that of our Lord's own teaching, that in the meal, which He instituted, He Himself was to be the food of the faithful disciple. Through these symbols of manna and living water it was the purpose of the Spirit of God in Christ to feed their spirits, and He would have done so if only the people had had faith enough to believe in His presence with them. As it was, nearly

all of them failed in this necessary faith, and in consequence they were overthrown in the wilderness. In all which circumstances of trial, continues the apostle, they are figures of ourselves. We have similar religious privileges—*i.e.* we have "spiritual meat and drink"—and we have similar temptations in the world to want of faith, leading us to "lust after evil things," or to "murmur," or to "tempt the Lord," or "commit fornication." That is the general parallel. Now what was the special difficulty in the Corinthian Church which St. Paul is here preparing to determine? It was the question, as we see from the first verse of chapter viii., whether Christians might lawfully take part in pagan sacrificial feasts. The point, therefore, to be especially impressed in the parallel from the history of the Old Covenant was that the Israelites, notwithstanding that God's presence was so near to them, fell actually into idolatry. "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (in other words, their idolatry consisted in taking part in a sacrificial feast not offered to Jehovah), "wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."

Then, having given the Corinthians this general warning, the apostle presently carries the matter further by inquiring what principle is involved in every sort of sacrificial feast.

2. 1 Cor. x. 15—"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing[1] which we bless, is it not the *fellowship* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the *fellowship* of the body of Christ? Because we, the many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake from the one bread." The principle to which St. Paul appeals, as one that is obviously involved in the Christian feast, is the principle of fellowship. A fellowship involves two ideas—first, a union among the members of the fellowship; secondly, that which constitutes the union. A family is a fellowship constituted by one parental blood. A nation is a fellowship constituted by a common law and language. The Church also is a fellowship; and this is constituted by a covenant with God. Now, the fellowship in

[1] Does the "cup of blessing" mean (1) the cup which our Lord blessed by giving thanks over it, or (2) the cup which brings the divine blessing? For εὐλογία in the latter sense, cf. Rom. xv. 29; Eph. i. 3. Perhaps both meanings are combined.

the New Covenant is realised whenever the Church takes part in the Eucharist. For what, asks St. Paul, is the meaning of this sacred cup for which we give thanks? It means the Blood of Christ shed to bring us into covenant fellowship with God. What is the meaning of the sacred bread which we break? It witnesses unmistakably to our fellowship in Christ; for in partaking from the one bread we, the many, become united in the one bread. Whatever the loaf symbolises in its unbroken state—and we know it symbolises the body of Christ—that must we symbolise when the loaf has become ourselves; it is as though we were taken into the loaf. The bread, therefore, witnesses unmistakably to our fellowship in Christ. "One bread, one body, we the many are"—that is the emphatic order of St. Paul's words—and the bread means the Body of Christ. That being so, what room is there left for Christians to have fellowship with any other God or Lord?

To each of the two sides of this principle of fellowship St. Paul has occasion to appeal in his letter—later he will recur to the thought of the "one body" as excluding every practice

in the Lord's Supper which could hinder the realisation of the fellowship of Christians among themselves ; at the moment he is more concerned with the other idea, that which constitutes this fellowship—namely, the relation of each and all to God in Christ. And so he strengthens his argument from the Christian Eucharist by parallels from both Jewish and heathen sacrificial feasts. Each of these fellowships, he says, involves a relation with a spiritual being, God or demon. "Behold Israel after the flesh : have not they which eat the sacrifices fellowship with the altar?" As the Israelites consumed, let us say, the Paschal lamb which had been sacrificed in the Temple, what they were doing was to realise their covenant fellowship with God. In the same way, by a sacrificial feast, the heathen worshippers symbolised their fellowship with the idols. And as there cannot be at the same time, in the same society, two constituting principles of fellowship—union with God and union with idols or demons—it must follow that a Christian has no place at a pagan feast. That is St. Paul's argument, an argument addressed to this special and

practical point. But St. Paul's habit of meeting practical difficulties by going down to root principles makes his teaching, even on a subject of such remote and antiquarian interest, as it may seem, full of instruction for us even to-day. In this case the fact that he draws a parallel between the Christian Sacrament and a Jewish or heathen sacrificial feast shows us that (as he expressly tells us later) he had received the doctrine of the Sacrament, which we find in the Gospels—viz. that it was ordained by Christ as a means of feeding upon the Sacrifice which inaugurated the New Covenant—the Sacrifice of Himself.

Now, the question is always being asked whether we are right in speaking of the Eucharist as a Sacrifice, and as St. Paul is here treating of the Eucharist in connexion with sacrificial ideas, we can, as it were, put the question to him. Can we gather what his answer would have been? St. Paul's answer, it seems to me, would be this: If by a Sacrifice you mean a sacrificial feast, then certainly the Eucharist is a Sacrifice; but it is not by itself a Sacrifice in the full sense of the word because the Victim has

already been offered. St. Paul's doctrine of the Eucharist, in this aspect, is exactly expressed by a verse familiar as part of the Easter anthem, which in its original application had no direct Eucharist reference: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast." The Paschal sacrifice consisted of two parts, the offering of the unblemished lamb to God, and the communion of the people upon its flesh; the offering of the True Paschal Lamb was made by Christ, "once, only once, and once for all"; and what remains for the Church is the perpetual feast upon the holy life, for which the Eucharist is certainly one appointed means.

It may be interesting to put side by side with the teaching of St. Paul what we can gather as to the same subject from the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is fuller in its doctrine of the "New Covenant" than any other of the New Testament books, and connects both Sacraments directly with the covenant sacrifice. The sprinkling of the blood of the covenant sacrifice is associated with the inward grace of the Sacrament of Baptism.[1] "Let us draw

[1] See Nairne, *Bible Doctrine of Atonement*, p. 103 (Murray).

near with a true heart, in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (x. 22). Then the covenant feast is associated in like manner with the Eucharist, though with great boldness the covenant sacrifice is identified with the sin-offering, of which in the old dispensation not even the priests were allowed to partake. "We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle; for the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering for sin*, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (xiii. 10-13). The thought in this passage is not difficult to grasp, but it escapes from the figures in which the apostolic writer attempts to clothe it. He would teach us that participation in the Sacrifice of Christ—the feeding upon Him—is primarily for the forgiveness of our sins and our perpetual renewal, but that it must

also make us ready to face whatever suffering and obloquy our Christian profession shall bring upon us. We cannot doubt that when he says "We have an altar" from which we have a right to "eat," he was thinking of the Eucharist; and if so, his teaching, with whatever differences, falls into line with St. Paul's as to the Eucharist being not a sacrifice, but a feast upon a sacrifice already made.

But again, the Eucharist is sometimes spoken of as a sacrifice because it is held in some way to correspond with Christ's offering in heaven, which is supposed to be perpetual. Now, the Epistle to the Hebrews is most clear and emphatic in its statement that the offering of Christ was a heavenly offering; for it is the doctrine of the Epistle, as indeed of the whole Bible, that a sacrifice consists, not in the death of a victim, but in the offering to God of the life-blood; and in regard to our Lord's Sacrifice—which was indeed the only true Sacrifice—the Epistle teaches us that His offering was completed when His Life was carried into the heavenly place and presented to the Father. But the Epistle is quite as clear and emphatic

in the statement that this offering was made once for all. It is not said that it was a perpetual offering. On the contrary, the idea is that, by the entrance of our great High Priest once for all into the holy of holies, the way for us thither has been opened for ever. (x. 19, *cf.* ix. 8)—"Christ," it is said, "entered in *once for all* into the holy place, having obtained *eternal* redemption" (ix. 13); and again, "Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us; *nor yet that He should offer Himself often*" (ix. 24); and again, and most emphatically, "He, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins, *for ever sat down* on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet" (x. 13).

The misapprehension as to the Lord's perpetual offering may have arisen from the fact that He is still, in the Presence of God, spoken of as "a Great Priest." But the functions of a true priest were not restricted to "offering." As the Epistle reminds us, the High Priest has a side of his office from God to

man, as well as a side from man to God. He must be one "who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring." And so it is said of Christ, "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need." It is certainly true that the writer speaks of our Lord as "ever living to make intercession for us"; but intercession is not propitiation; it proceeds upon the basis of propitiation already accomplished;[1] and the

[1] We may compare 1 John ii. 2. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." The "propitiation," according to the Levitical theory, was the pure life-blood interposed between God's eyes and human sin. The presence of Christ in our human nature with the Father secures the perpetual presence of that "propitiation"; but the sacrificial action was completed Godward when the new life was made available for men. Advocacy proceeds on that basis. Dr. Bright has well translated this idea of propitiation into less technical language in his Eucharistic hymn:

> Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
> And only look on us as found in Him.

final idea of the Epistle is that of the King-Priest—the Priest after the order of Melchizedek, made higher than the heavens, seated at God's right hand, to succour those who come to God through Him. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."[1] If our theological language, therefore, is to be based upon Scripture, we have no right to speak of our Lord's continuous priestly action in heaven as a "self-offering"; it is a Kingly ministry of mercy and grace; and, therefore, the Eucharist cannot be viewed in connexion with that priestly action as anything else than a means of grace, a sacrificial feast of eternal efficacy.

The question then may be very fairly asked how it came about that without (as we have seen) any express Scriptural warrant, the Eucharist began, very early in the history of the Church, to be spoken of as a "sacrifice." The answer is that it became the centre of the Church's worship. When it is remembered that the "blessing" of the bread and the cup was in

[1] See Westcott, *Historic Faith*, p. 82. Stephen saw "the Son of man *standing* on the right hand of God"; but this was, as Bengel says, "quasi obvium Stephano."

the form of a thanksgiving,[1] we see how easily this thanksgiving could become the nucleus of a liturgy. In the liturgical development, though the subject falls outside the scope of these lectures, it may be convenient to note two stages, because of the change that passed over the meaning of the word "sacrifice." In the first period, when the Eucharist is spoken of as a "sacrifice," what is meant is a "sacrifice of thanksgiving." Thus in the *Didache* we read: "On the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and *give thanks*, first confessing your transgressions, that your *sacrifice* may be pure." And when we examine the Eucharistic prayer in that manual, we find that it is in substance not an oblation but a thanksgiving:

"Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for Thy name's sake, and didst give food and drink unto men for enjoyment, that they might render thanks to Thee; but didst bestow upon us spiritual food and drink and

[1] Compare, in the description of the original institution, the εὐλογήσας of Mark (xiv. 22) and Matthew (xxvi. 26) with the εὐχαριστήσας of Luke (xxii. 19) and Paul (1 Cor. xi. 24).

eternal life through Thy Servant. Before all things we give Thee thanks that Thou art mighty; Thine is the glory for ever and ever."

Similarly we find Justin Martyr, about the middle of the second century, speaking in general terms of "the sacrifices which Jesus Christ delivered to us to make"; but when we turn to his description of the Eucharist, we find, as in the *Didache*, that the Eucharistic prayer is one of thanksgiving:

"Afterwards is brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of water and wine, and he takes it and *offers up praise and glory* to the Father of the Universe, through the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and *gives thanks* (εὐχαριστίαν ποιεῖται) at length that these favours have been vouchsafed us from Him; and when he has concluded the prayers and *the thanksgiving* (εὐχαριστίαν) the whole assembly assents, saying Amen. . . . Then when the president has given thanks and the whole people assented, the deacons give to each person a share of the bread and wine and water *for which the thanksgiving has been made* (εὐχαριστηθέντος) and for the absent they take away a portion" (*Apol.* i. 66.)

The second stage in liturgical development came naturally with the lapse of time. In the minds of the first generations of believers the great idea of the sacrifice of Christ could not fail to be realised as the constant background of the Eucharist. Whenever the Church assembled to eat the bread and drink the cup they, by so doing, "proclaimed the Lord's death." Similarly the first readers of the apostolic epistles could hardly fail to understand that the sacrifice of Christ entailed upon Christians similar sacrifices in the power of the Spirit; that is to say, the surrender of their own being and will to the Father in heaven for His service upon earth, a doctrine clearly laid down by St. Paul in the twelfth chapter of Romans and the fifth chapter of Ephesians, and summed up with vigorous terseness in two verses at the end of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "*Through him* let us offer up a *sacrifice of praise* to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name. But to *do good and to distribute* forget not, for with *such sacrifices* God is well pleased" (xiii. 15, 16). It was natural, therefore, as time went on, that these

implicit elements in the Eucharist should receive clear expression, and that the liturgy should become, as it were, a dramatic representation of the whole Christian mystery; exhibiting, by way of memorial, the Sacrifice of Christ as well as feeding on it, and typifying also by prayer and almsgiving the Christian's sacrifice of love to God and man. The way was made easy for these representations by the custom of what is called in the Epistle of Clement the "offering of the gifts" (xliv. 8) which gifts certainly included the Eucharistic elements;[1] so that the offering of these as a likeness of the Body and Blood of the Saviour became both a memorial of His Passion and an emblem of the Christian's sacrifice. In the earliest extant liturgy, that of Sarapion, an Egyptian bishop of the fourth century, we find the words 'To Thee we have offered this bread, the *likeness* (ὁμοίωμα) of the body of the only begotten . . . we have offered also the cup, the *likeness* of the blood.'[2] And in the earliest known form of the Roman canon,

[1] See Lightfoot *in loc.*

[2] Bishop Sarapion's *Prayer Book*, edited by the Bishop of Salisbury (S.P.C.K.), p. 62.

dated by Duchesne about the year 400, we have a similar explanation given of this oblation of the Eucharistic elements: "Make for us this oblation approved, ratified, reasonable, acceptable, because it is the *likeness* (figura) of the body and blood of Jesus Christ."[1] There can be little doubt that in its original intention this oblation of the Eucharistic elements was emblematic of the Sacrifice of Christ. But as the Sacrifice of Christ involves the sacrifice of His body the Church, the one emblem can carry both significations. And, most instructively, the Roman canon passes from the prayer that the Church's oblation may be accepted as a commemoration of our Lord's Sacrifice, to a prayer that it may be accepted like "the gifts of righteous Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and what was offered to Thee by the high priest Melchizedek." This use of the word "sacrifice," as applied to the Eucharistic worship in the sense of a sacrifice of praise, including the representation of the Sacrifice of Christ both for and in His Church, is retained in the Prayer of Oblation in our present liturgy, and

[1] Duchesne, *Christian Worship* (S.P.C.K.), p. 178.

is, of course, perfectly legitimate and Scriptural; but it must be carefully distinguished from the propitiatory sense of the word discussed above.

3. In the eleventh chapter, in view of the selfish behaviour of the Corinthians, which, as St. Paul said, made "the Lord's Supper" into the private supper of each individual, the apostle rehearses the account he had received of the institution and meaning of the rite: "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

In considering this passage, the first question that presents itself is—What did St. Paul mean by saying that he had received this account "from the Lord"? If we are to assume that his narrative of events had been communicated to the apostle in a vision, we should be obliged to attach peculiar importance to it in all points

in which it differed from the other accounts preserved in the Gospels. Is it necessary to do this? Have we any parallel that might guide us? In the Epistle to the Galatians, in which St. Paul is defending his position as an apostle from the attacks of the Judaisers, he makes the strong claim for his Gospel that he had not received it from man, but by revelation of Jesus Christ (i. 12). This revelation consisted, first, of the assurance of the Resurrection, and, secondly, of its meaning in relation to the Cross. And St. Paul's reference in 2 Cor. xii. to other revelations he had received—the exceeding glory of them, the unspeakable words heard, as of one caught up to the third heaven—does not convey the impression that they consisted of a narrative of historical facts. Moreover, the words themselves "from the Lord" do not necessarily mean more than that the story of the institution came ultimately from the Lord Himself. It is best, therefore, to regard the passage as parallel with the tradition of the Resurrection appearances in the fifteenth chapter, which opens almost with the same formula—"I delivered unto you that which also I received."

There are two points in St. Paul's narrative which call for comment. First, the detail that the cup was given "after supper." Can this note of time have got displaced, and refer to the whole institution, like the "as they were eating" of St. Mark? The similarity of the words used with the bread and the cup suggests that they were not separated by any long interval. It must be added that these words have also a liturgical sound, which forbids us to press any of their details against those of the Synoptic narratives. As I have already explained (p. 74), I prefer the order of consecration given in St. Luke to that of St. Paul and St. Mark, because he seems to retain earlier features in the historical setting; and also because when the sacrificial note has been struck by the words, "This is my blood of the covenant," an explanation is supplied of the other words, "Take ye; this is my body," which else they seem to lack.

The second point to notice is of more consequence. St. Paul introduces the words, "This do for my remembrance," which are not found in the Gospel account. As St. Mark's words at the giving of the cup, "This is my blood

of the covenant," look more original—being more personal and touching—than St. Paul's fuller version, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood,"[1] we may be right in thinking that the words "This do for my remembrance" were implied at the institution rather than expressed. What is of more consequence is to fix their meaning. Some commentators read a sacrificial meaning into both the words "do" and "remembrance," so that the whole sentence runs: "Offer this bread and cup in sacrifice as a memorial of me before God." In defence of this interpretation it is pointed out that the Greek word for "do" is sometimes in the Greek version of the Old Testament used sacrificially, and that the word for "memorial" is used for a memorial before God. The philological question cannot be discussed here,[2] though in passing it may be pointed out that "do this" is a common expression in the Old Testament, as in every other literature, the meaning of which must be determined by the context. And it is the context here that must determine the meaning of

[1] See Robinson, "Eucharist" in *Enc. Bibl.*, p. 1420.
[2] See Plummer, Hastings' *Dict.*, iii. 150.

both expressions. Let us remind ourselves of what is taking place. Our Lord hands a cup to His disciples with the words, "This is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many. Do this, as oft as ye drink it, unto my remembrance." What was done with the blood of the Old Covenant in the Mosaic story? It was put by the mediator upon the altar and upon the people to bring both into fellowship. In the New Covenant our Lord takes the place of Moses, His own blood takes the place of the blood of the sacrifice; and what by analogy should we expect Him to do with it? Give it to the people to offer to God? But that would destroy the symbolic parallel. The blood was the blood of sprinkling. It was already in His own Person in touch with God, and He puts it—though by a more intimate symbol than sprinkling—upon the people to bring them into the Covenant. "Do this," then, can only mean "Do this action." The context must similarly determine the sense of "remembrance" or "memorial"; and in this case St. Paul supplies the context, for he goes on to say, "As often as ye eat this bread or

drink this cup ye do *preach*[1] the Lord's death till he come." Not only is your Eucharist a memorial of the Passion for yourselves—though it must be this chiefly—it is also a proclamation to the world.

And then, after this recital of the institution of the Eucharist, comes the practical censure on the conduct of the Corinthians. They had not proclaimed the Lord's death by their Eucharist; for the gospel of His death was the gospel of the "New Covenant," the "fellowship" into which men were brought with God, the new social order in which all were "one man in Christ Jesus." Their Eucharist had been disgraced by selfishness, by greediness, by contempt of the poor. They had eaten "unworthily," without thought and judgment;[2] and so, instead of preaching the Lord's death, they had insulted it and all that

[1] καταγγέλλετε, *cf.* Acts xvii. 3, 23, etc.; Phil. i. 17; Rom. i. 8.

[2] St. Paul gains antithesis all through this passage by the use of various compounds of the Greek verb "to judge." We might suggest the effect of ver. 29 in the original by saying: "He that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment against himself, if he misjudge the body"; or, "incriminates himself by eating and drinking, if he discriminate not the body."

it meant. St. Paul puts their offence into one pregnant phrase. They had not "discerned[1] the body"—not this time "the body and blood." He has passed on in thought from the body of Christ as it was offered in sacrifice to the "body" which His Spirit had constituted out of living men, in despising which these wealthy Corinthians had despised the Lord Himself. The apostle had said above—"The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?" To ignore the fellowship is "not to discern the body."

[1] See note on previous page.

VI

THE EUCHARIST: ITS PRIMITIVE CELEBRATION

The cup of blessing which we bless, . . . the bread which we break.—1 Cor. x. 16.

In this last lecture of the series I propose to inquire what we can learn from the New Testament about the earliest celebrations of the Christian Eucharist. We shall begin by collecting the references in the Acts of the Apostles, and then examine St. Paul's statements in the First Epistle to the Corinthians; but for clearness' sake it may be well to state at first one conclusion to which the documents seem to lead—that the Sacramental rite in the apostolic age formed part, probably the final part, of a solemn meal called usually the "breaking of bread"[1] but once "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. xi. 20).

[1] That the "breaking of bread" was the meal, not merely the Sacrament, appears from a comparison of Acts xx. 7, *συνηγμένων κλάσαι ἄρτον*; 1 Cor. xi. 33, *συνερχόμενοι εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν*; and xi. 21, *προλαμβάνει ἐν τῷ φαγεῖν*.

1. The first reference in the Acts comes in the description of the life of the Church after the three thousand members had been added on the day of Pentecost. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (ii. 42). The first two terms of this description are combined, a verse or two further on, in the words, "And all that believed together had all things in common" (Westcott and Hort's text); and the second two terms are expanded into the description, "day by day continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread in the house (*i.e.* in private houses),[1] they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart" (ii. 46). The first Christian fellowship, that is to say, which was entirely Jewish, divided its religious worship between the Temple and the home. They kept, perhaps, the hours of prayer in the Temple (iii. 1), and they met (as their numbers allowed) in private houses for the celebration of their own Christian rite.

The question, therefore, arises, Was this daily "breaking of bread" a celebration of

[1] Hort's *Judaistic Christianity*, p. 44.

Holy Communion such as we are now familiar with, or was it a meal, and, if the latter, was it an ordinary or a special meal? That the Eucharist was celebrated at some meal seems to be the natural interpretation of St. Luke's words, "breaking in private houses bread, they partook of food in joy and simplicity of heart." The words "they partook of food" imply a meal; while the contrast with the Temple service implies that the meal was a religious ceremony. On this point most scholars are agreed,[1] and if the idea is strange to us to-day, we should remember that to the pious Jew all his meals were religious ceremonies, introduced and concluded with solemn benedictions, of which our customary "graces" are but faint survivals.[2] We must not forget

[1] See Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, ii. 2.313; Plummer, Hastings' *Dict.*, iii. 144. M. Batiffol disagrees. He interprets St. Luke's phrase "took food in gladness" as a Biblical way of saying that their life was passed without anxiety. I do not think this interpretation can stand in face of the fact that St. Luke is not making a quotation, and that he uses the same expression—μεταλαβεῖν τροφῆς later, in a context which compels us to take it literally (Acts xxvii. 33).

[2] See the description of a meal, quoted from the Talmud, in Keating's *The Agape and the Eucharist*, p. 35.

either that it was at a meal that the Sacrament was instituted, so that it was likely, at least for a while, to continue so to be celebrated.

If we go on to ask what was the meal distinguished as "the breaking of the bread," we may recall one special meal which the Jerusalem Church held daily; for when the Greek Jews complained that their "widows" were neglected "in the daily ministration," the apostles appointed seven men to "serve tables," which implies that the daily ministration was a ministration by means of "tables," or common meals. And it is noticeable that the passage about "breaking bread" comes in a description of the marvellous unity which prevailed in the Church. The brethren believed together and had all things common—they sold their possessions and parted them to all as any man had need, they were with one accord in the Temple, and they broke bread in their houses, taking their food with joy. We might have conjectured, therefore, that this "daily ministration" would have furnished the opportunity for the daily Eucharist, but there is no evidence that it was so; and the apostles' words may be taken to imply that

they did not regard this meal as belonging to the sphere of their spiritual responsibility (vi. 4). We have no information, then, about the meal at which the Eucharist was held ; the presumption would be that it was the evening meal, as at the institution : the first meal of the new day.

2. The only other mention of the Eucharist in the Acts comes in the story of St. Paul's preaching at Troas : "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow ; and prolonged his speech until midnight. And there were many lights[1] in the upper chamber, where we were gathered together. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep ; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep, he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and, embracing him said, Make

[1] The hymn at the lighting of lamps, φῶς ἱλαρόν ἁγίας δόξης, well known in Keble's version, "Hail, gladdening light," is of primitive antiquity, and would have been of special significance at the Lord's Supper.

ye no ado; for his life is in him. And when he had gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed" (xx. 7-11).

We learn from this passage, what the Epistles confirm, that Sunday had become the day of Christian assembly, the Sunday beginning, after the Jewish way of reckoning, at sunset on Saturday. We cannot but wish that St. Luke had been moved to describe more fully a scene so familiar to him, but to us so hard to realise. He tells us that the brethren assembled to "break bread"—that is, to keep the common meal, of which the Sacrament formed the chief part; but he does not make it clear whether this meal preceded St. Paul's address, being followed after the revival of Eutychus by the Sacrament, or whether St. Paul spoke at the beginning and the interest of his hearers kept them from the meal till after midnight. The latter seems the straightforward sense of the passage, for there is no mention of eating till St. Paul had once more gone back to the upper room. Then we have the five words "having-broken the bread and

eaten" (γευσάμενος)[1] which have a liturgical sound. We may think that the miracle which had been wrought would have been reason enough for going straight to the Sacrament; but St. Luke tells us nothing, and it is idle to conjecture.

3. When we turn from the Acts to the First Epistle to the Corinthians it is as though a veil were lifted, and we see the brethren gathered together in their assembly, now for mutual edification (xiv. 26), and now for their sacred meal (xi. 33). The Eucharist is celebrated by the division among them of a single loaf (x. 17), and the circulation of a single cup. Of the Supper there is no express description. But it is clear that the Eucharistic rite by itself will not account for the practices which St. Paul rebukes. "In your eating each one taketh before other his own supper, and one is hungry and another is drunken." No drunkenness could follow the sharing in a single loving-cup, nor could hunger be satisfied by the sharing of a single loaf.[2] It seems implied

[1] For γεύσασθαι, in the sense of "taste," *cf.* Matt. xxvii. 34, Col. ii. 21, and perhaps also Acts x. 10.

[2] On the other hand, M. Batiffol holds that there was nothing to eat and drink except the Sacramental bread and wine. He does not, however, explain how the most

that the Sacrament is an incident in a meal, which St. Paul speaks of as the Lord's Supper (xi. 20), and which he defines by contrast with the Corinthian selfishness as essentially the supper of a fellowship.[1] The Lord's Supper, as St. Paul uses the expression, must have meant such a Supper as the Lord kept with His disciples on the night of His betrayal, a supper of which the institution of the Sacrament was the climax. It followed, therefore, that in the Christian feast this climax gave its character to the whole Supper, so that a selfish or irreverent eating of the Supper was a sin of profanity against the Sacrament itself.

It was the manner in which the Corinthian brethren celebrated this Supper against which the apostle inveighs. It may have been the custom at Corinth for each household to bring its own contribution to the common meal. In

"unworthy" eating and drinking of this could "shame the poor"; nor indeed how, if the bread and wine were blessed by the president, one could "take" his meal before another. See "L'Agape" in *Études d'histoire et de théologie positive.*

[1] The contrast between κυριακὸν δεῖπνον and τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον determines the sense of the former expression as referring to the meal rather than to the Sacrament.

this case we must suppose that, instead of treating these contributions of food as common stock, the rich kept what they had brought to themselves, eating and drinking to excess, and leaving, perhaps, their fragments for the poor. If the meal was provided by the Church officers, then their offence must have been that they began the Supper before the poor, who were detained at work, could arrive. In any case, they made divisions in what was either a fellowship or nothing. St. Paul's judgment is that the Supper should not begin till all the local Church was assembled, and that it should be used rather as a symbol of brotherliness than for the satisfaction of appetite.[1]

We can understand, from this example, why the Church presently decided to separate the Sacrament from a meal, which was thus capable of abuse.

[1] We have a somewhat similar charge of misconduct brought, in the Epistle of Jude, against certain false teachers, who are called "hidden rocks in the love-feasts" and "shepherds that, without fear, feed themselves"—expressions which seem to convey a charge of greediness and sensuality. On the "love-feast" see Robinson, *Enc. Bibl.*, 1424.

4. It remains to say something of the primitive mode of celebrating the Sacrament itself and of the minister by whom the celebration was made. Strictly speaking, the part of the Church in this Sacrament is that of a recipient. We are guests at the Lord's table. From among the Lord's gifts, indeed, the Church makes a certain preparation for the feast, as at the miracle of feeding the disciples brought their barley loaves. But what we bring is little compared with what we receive. The promise of Christ is that these simple elements shall become spiritual food for His Church whenever they are eaten and drunk in memory of Him. Accordingly, the main element in the rite must soon have come to be a Memorial of the Passion (p. 102). For the rest the ceremonial action has from the first (1 Cor. x. 16) followed that of the Lord Himself, who blessed and broke the bread and blessed the cup. That action, which St. Matthew and St. Mark describe as "blessing," St. Luke and St. Paul describe as "thanksgiving"; and the earliest blessings of the cup and bread that have come down to us are thanksgivings for the Redemption in Christ. From the

apostolic age no form remains; whether the apostles and prophets spoke as the Spirit moved them or used a form of words as the basis of their thanksgiving we do not know; certainly a liberty of thanksgiving continued even after forms had come into use. The *Didache* allows "prophets" to give thanks in their own words, and as late as Justin Martyr we have a reference to the celebrant's "power" of thanksgiving. He tells us that the president offers up praise and glory to the Father of all things through the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and makes a thanksgiving of some length for His goodness in vouchsafing to give us these things. This thanksgiving, therefore, is the act of the whole Church—"the cup of blessing," says St. Paul, "which *we* bless."

But it needs a mouthpiece. The only "celebrant"—to use the modern term—mentioned in the New Testament is the Apostle Paul, on the occasion when he "broke bread" at Troas; and naturally, for many reasons, not least for the sake of unity both in doctrine and discipline, we soon find it to be the rule that the chief local officer of the Church

should represent his brethren in this highest act of their religion. But it is worth noticing that in apostolic times no church officer was appointed specially for this purpose, nor is it once mentioned among the duties of any officer or office, though St. Paul on several occasions gives us lists of such.[1] Men were ordained to spiritual functions within the body, but not expressly for this or for baptizing, which were the actions of the whole body. I draw attention to this fact, because our own Church at the Reformation returned in this matter to Biblical and primitive precedent, and removed from the mediæval form used at the Ordination of Presbyters the words "receive the power of offering sacrifice to God,"[2] in pursuance of its policy of returning to the Bible doctrine of this Sacrament, as being a feast of communion upon the one perfect Sacrifice once offered.

Let me now, in conclusion, bring together what we have seen to be the apostolical teaching

[1] Rom. xii. 4-9; 1 Cor. xii. 27-30; Eph. iv. 11-13.

[2] See the full account in Pullan, Book of Common Prayer, "Ordinal," and especially the ordination prayer quoted from Bishop Sarapion's Ordinal, "which contains no reference to any sacramental act except that of reconciliation."

about the Eucharist, and in doing so let me guard against being supposed to deny that the Church to-day, as a living Church, has its own experience, and has also the right to use expressions about the Sacrament which answer to its experience. We can hardly help doing so ; and any *catena* of passages in regard to it chosen through the Christian centuries will show, with a general agreement in principles, a very great difference in modes of expression. But the Church of England holds that there is a real sense in which the substance of the faith was once for all delivered, and that for the articles of that faith we must look to the New Testament, which is the only expression that remains to us of the mind of the Apostolic Church. Accordingly, while we have full liberty to find our spiritual profit in the devotional thought of our own age, and of every age, we are bound to bring all back to the test of Scripture, and not teach anything, or require anything to be believed, except "what is read therein or may be proved thereby."

1. The Christian doctrine of the Church is that Christ is always present with His people

and in His people. "Lo, I am with you alway," He said; and, again, speaking of His disciples to the Father, "I in them and thou in me." These two truths we hold together; and together they form the charter of the Church's spiritual life. In every member of the blessed company who have received "the earnest of the Spirit," there is the personal life of Him who is the Word of God, who made all things and holds them in being, and yet in a special way comes to His own to make them sons of God (Gal. iii. 27). Christ is in us. Nevertheless, Christ is not in us as we hope He may one day be. One day, the promise is, that we shall be like Him; but who will not agree that every Christian needs more of Christ's nature, to work in us more of His likeness? In the Holy Communion we realise Christ as present with us, in order that by His Spirit He may perfect His Presence in us. Ideally, the Sacrament is a *communion* of Christ and His people, the active realisation of the truth that we are living in Him and He in us; that we are His very members, because of His taking us into Himself through the Blood of the Covenant

shed on our behalf. This is certainly the sense of St. Paul's words: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" But because when He comes to us, He does not find us as He would have us be, the *communion* must become a *communication*. Happy are we if, though we cannot echo St. Paul's "I can do all things in Christ," we yet believe that in Him is life, and come to Him that we may have life.

2. But under what guise does our Saviour hold communion with His Church in this Sacrament? Surely it is as He appeared to Thomas in the Upper Chamber, bearing the tokens of His Passion; as He appeared to St. John in His revelation of the eternal world —as a "Lamb that had been slain." The tradition which St. Paul had delivered to the Church at Corinth is the tradition the Church has always delivered, and still rehearses at every Eucharist. It says to the faithful, The sonship which you have received from the only Son, and which you now come together that you may realise in Him, and that He may quicken in you, is the sonship of One who, though now "perfected for evermore," yet in

the days of His flesh, though He was a Son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered. It is this Sonship which He shares with you, and which must manifest itself in the days of your flesh, perhaps in suffering, but certainly in obedience. The way for us into the holy place is none other than the way He consecrated—viz. "through His flesh"; and as that meant a flesh which offered itself without spot to God through His Eternal Spirit, so, by the same Eternal Spirit, no other life can be vouchsafed to us than that which consciously in all its actions makes the same offering. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God."

3. Christ, then, being present with His Church when we assemble to "break the bread," and being so present, we believe that He does then give Himself to us. He quickens our human nature through His Spirit. All life is from Him, and He comes to us that we may have life abundantly. The parables of the Vine and the Branches and the Body and its Members teach us that apart from Christ we are nothing and can do nothing; but to their teaching we must add this further

lesson, that for fellowship in Him we need more than the tacit consent of the limb or the branch; we need an active exercise of will to draw upon the life that is in Christ for us. We must, as He said, "eat and drink" His humanity; we must hunger and thirst after it, and then satisfy our hunger. This is why, in our liturgy, we are bidden to feed on Him in our hearts "by faith"; and do not let us think of faith as anything but the real and strong movement of our whole nature, spirit, soul, and body, out of our constant preoccupation with material things, into the spiritual and eternal world, where Christ waits to bless us.

4. Lastly, we must remember that though, in an abstract way of speaking, the Sacrament is intended to be a means of life for each of us singly, yet as soon as we come to any concrete example of a living action we find that it concerns other members of the fellowship. No one lives to himself. And nowhere is this lesson so plainly taught, if we would but learn it, as in the Lord's Supper, in which the very symbols—a loaf and a cup shared in common—are emblematic of fellowship, and

in which the life we come to seek is the life of Him who went about doing good and who gave His life a ransom "for many." Let us take that word "many" and interpret it, in our own giving, as widely as we can; realising the claim upon our life, in all its energies of thought and prayer and service, of the many Societies in which we have fellowship—family, nation, Church—and beyond them all the "Kingdom of God." And let us pray that the time may come, of which the perfect fellowship of the Apostolic Church was the symbol, when all shall be one; using sometimes in our devotions that most ancient of Eucharistic prayers: "As this bread was once scattered upon the mountains, and was gathered together and became one; so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom" (*Didache*, c. ix.).

TWO SERMONS

I.—SYMBOLS

The doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands.—HEB. vi. 2

THE part of this doctrine which alone I can consider on this occasion, is the principle underlying the use of all such symbols. Take baptism, for example. Baptism is the rite of admission to the Christian Church, and its appropriateness as an initiatory ceremony is evident. For baptism is, in essence, a washing, and the pre-requisite for admission into any holy society must be purification. But the question at once presents itself, How can any outward washing purify the soul? The Psalmist says to God, "*Thou* shalt wash me and I shall be whiter than snow"; and we assent; if God should cleanse the heart of evil passions, a man would indeed be born again. But as baptism, so far as appears, is only a ceremony, symbolising purification, how can such a symbol profit us?

A symbol is, of course, a symbol of something, and it is that something behind the symbol which gives it its value. Most of us are so constituted that ideas have little chance of appealing to us until they are clothed in symbols. "Ideas," says a great novelist, "are often poor ghosts, our sun-filled eyes cannot discern them; they pass by us in thin vapour, and cannot make themselves felt. But sometimes they are made flesh; then their presence is a power." Now symbols are ideas "made flesh"; and it is only when they are so clothed with flesh and blood that to most men ideas become a power. Talk to a simple soldier about patriotism, and, though he may assent to your doctrine, you leave him cold; but the flag, the colour of his regiment, stirs him to his depths. In the flag the bare idea of patriotism takes flesh; it stretches out human hands to him; it speaks of all the sacrifices made in the past, of all the lives surrendered, of all the victories won, in the name and for the sake of England. The cynic may protest that the flag is but a piece of coloured cloth; but that is very much as if he were to describe a man as

animated flesh and blood. A man is that indeed, but how much more! The living flesh is but the temporary and material form through which he impresses himself on his neighbours and does his work in the world. The man himself is spirit. And so the flag is much more than coloured cloth. It is the outward form of the idea of patriotism through which it impresses itself, and does its work, and becomes a power.

It is by the use of such outward forms, or symbols, that the deepest ideas we have about nature and human life are best expressed and best communicated. What else is the meaning of poetry? Did Shakespeare write *Hamlet* because he was interested in the fortunes of a mythical prince of Denmark, kept out of his kingdom by a murderous and adulterous uncle? We know it was not so. Shakespeare was thinking, not about Hamlet, but about man —himself, and you, and me; and the prince of Denmark was but a symbol to clothe the ideas which he wished to convey to us. He could express his thought most adequately through an imaginative creation, and the imaginative creation would bring it most forcibly home to our

minds. When Wordsworth drew the picture of an aged man, patiently stirring a pond for leeches hour after hour to earn his scanty livelihood, and keeping, notwithstanding his penury, a stout and cheerful heart, the leech-gatherer was to him, as it has become to us, a symbol of human resolution and independence. And when he wished to touch our hearts with the thought of the undeserved misery that too often attends the feebleness of age, he told us of a flower he had seen by the way-side grown too old to close its petals against the storm :

> I stopp'd and said, with inly mutter'd voice:
> "It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold.
> This neither is its courage nor its choice,
> But its necessity in being old."

But now, take an example of a somewhat different kind of symbol, the symbolic action. When Englishmen meet, and wish to express their pleasure in meeting, they shake hands. The action is symbolic; but should we be right in calling it an empty form, and discarding it? Surely not. The shake of the hand clothes our feeling of friendship in flesh and blood, and gives it a real existence in the world. How should we tongue-tied

Englishmen express our affection for our friends, or our sympathy with the bereaved, or our satisfaction at our comrades' successes, if it were not for this outward and visible sign of the spirit within us? And not only is the shake of the hand expressive of what we feel, it transmits the feeling; through the symbolic action we convey our real self to our friend. And in the same way, when a hand is laid upon our head by one older and wiser than we, whom we look up to and revere, is there in that action less than in a shake of the hand? Is that an empty form, with no reality behind it, or may not that also transmit what we vaguely call "a blessing," some influence of person upon person inspiring us to make something better of our life than we have made of it hitherto?

This, then, seems to be clear: that true symbols, whether words or deeds, are symbols of realities, interpreting and conveying to us the reality behind themselves. And there is a complementary truth—that these symbols must find in us something real to appeal to, something human and intelligent and responsive, or they will appeal to us in vain.

Let us, then, apply this doctrine of symbols to the teaching of our Master Christ. He who knew what was in man, and knew best what would most appeal to man, used symbols of both these kinds. In order that the eternal truths which He came to teach might come most appealingly home to us He did not leave them to flit like ghosts, thin abstractions, through our human minds; He clothed them with flesh and blood; He embodied them in parables and tales and pictures that might hold the imagination and touch the heart. St. John the Theologian teaches us the great truth he had learned from his Master that God is Love, but how much less would that love of God mean to us, how much less universal would be its appeal, if we had never been told the story of the Lost Sheep or the Prodigal Son!

And so it was with the symbol which conveys personality. Our Saviour came, as we believe, not only to teach us about God, but to make us like God, by putting His own Spirit upon us and making us like Himself. And do you think those children whom He took up in His arms ever forgot,

if they were old enough to understand, how He laid His hands on them and prayed? Do you think that leper, the outcast from human society, ever forgot that Jesus laid His hand upon him as a symbol of his compassion and sympathy? Do you think the disciples ever forgot that washing of their feet on the night of all nights, a condescension harder to bear than the keenest reproof? And was it not, then, characteristic that when He was to be no longer seen among them, He should bequeath to them two symbolic actions to be His actions upon them for ever, although His bodily presence was withdrawn? He had said, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God"; and again, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you"; and so, having to depart, He instituted two sacraments—a washing in which they might be sure that His Spirit, though invisible, should cleanse them, and a feast in which they might be sure that He was still feeding them with His life.

The fact of the institution of these sacraments by Christ is not seriously in question.

Nevertheless, there are good people who feel uneasy in their minds about one or other. If so, the reason must be that the sacrament cannot be to them a real symbol; that is to say, there cannot be, in their view, any reality behind it, any real personal Spirit whose symbol it is, and with whom in these symbolic actions they are brought into communion. Our modern life has become so overloaded with material things that we have lost some of the sense our forefathers had of the nearness and reality of the eternal world. Our forefathers did not talk as we do to-day about the "immanence" of God in nature and man, but they were more ready to recognise that this visible world is but a veil before a world invisible; and that the Spirit of God speaks to man through the order and beauty of nature, and through the course of events, and also speaks to him in his own heart. But whether the difficulty be greater or less in one generation than in another, it is always difficult for the spirit of man to keep in touch with the spiritual world; and the sacraments were meant to be symbols of those mysterious processes which go on behind the veil; doors into the other

world; points of light where the mists dissolve and the eternal action of God becomes visible; points of contact where the human spirit may touch the divine. It may be that, if we were entirely spiritual beings, sacraments would be unnecessary for us, and that we should enjoy that uninterrupted communion and fellowship to which we one day look forward. But so long as it is possible for Christian men to spend day after day absorbed in the necessary business of their profession, who will not acknowledge that these symbols may be real ladders from earth to heaven, because they constrain us to realise the great truth which most of all it concerns us to realise—the abiding presence of Christ with His people?

The text speaks especially of baptism; and I may go on to observe that many Christians feel a difficulty about this sacrament which they do not feel about the other, owing to the practice of baptizing infants. A symbol requires not only a reality behind itself which it represents, but also a responsiveness in the receiver; or, as we say in theological language, the grace of a sacrament cannot be received

without faith. Most Christians, nevertheless, agree that the practice of infant baptism is justified by the fact, on which our service lays stress, that our Saviour commanded the children to be brought to Him and was angry with those who would keep them back. And the Church avoids the danger of baptism being regarded as a magical ceremony by requiring god-parents, as the representatives of the Church, to pledge their faith for the child and promise to do their best to plant faith in the child. Baptism, therefore, in the case of infants, means that they are brought at the earliest moment under the influence of Christ through parents and god-parents and friends, who do their utmost to bring them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In other words, a baptized child is very much in the position of a Christian catechumen: he is undergoing initiatory training in faith and morals; and the public profession of his own faith, which would in old days have been made at the baptism, is made now, by a wise provision of our English Church, when he comes to years of discretion. All that part of St. Paul's teaching about baptism,

which regards it as an act of faith, applies equally well in these days to Confirmation; and the recorded experiences of men in old days converted and baptized in riper years are reproduced to-day when young men, baptized in infancy, pledge their faith and make their prayer for the strengthening gifts of the Spirit.

There is, for example, a well-known passage in which St. Cyprian, in a letter to a friend, speaks about his own baptism and what it meant to him: "Whereas," he says, "I was encumbered with the many sins of my past life, which it seemed impossible to get rid of, so I had used myself to give way to my clinging infirmities, and, from despair of better things, to humour the evil of my heart, as slaves born in my house and my own proper offspring. But after that life-giving water succoured me, washing away the stains of former years and pouring into my cleansed and hallowed heart the light which comes from heaven; after that I drank in the heavenly Spirit and was created into a new man by a second birth, then marvellously what before was doubtful became plain to me, what was hidden became revealed, what was

dark began to shine, what was before difficult now had a way and a means, what had seemed impossible could now be achieved."

That is a wonderful record of experience in baptism, and it does not stand alone, but it could be paralleled to-day in the mission-field; and at home it could be paralleled in the experience of those who, after many hesitations, have yielded themselves to the drawing of Christ and, by a decisive action in Confirmation, have given up old habits of life and old friends, and have adopted instead a heavenly Master and a heavenly rule and the customs of a new society. According to their faith it is done unto them.

Of course the Church does not say that Christ does not feed His people in many other ways than through the sacraments. To say so would contradict both religion and experience. But the Church does say that if Christ is always present with His Church as He promised, and yet we have difficulty, through our want of faith, in finding and communing with Him, it is our wisdom not to refuse to seek Him at the trysting-places which He Himself has appointed.

II.—DISCERNMENT

He that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself if he discern not the body. . . . But if we discerned ourselves we should not be judged.—1 Cor. xi. 29, 31.

It was but three years since St. Paul had left Corinth after establishing there a Christian Church, and in the meantime Apollos, the eloquent Alexandrian, had evangelised them; and yet already, to judge from St. Paul's letter, much of the Christian spirit had vanished. Brotherly love seemed dead; its place was taken by faction, litigation, contempt for the poor and simple, even profligacy. How, we ask, could so short a time have wrought so great a change? How could their faith, kindled from the fiery souls of two such apostles, sink so quickly into ashes? We are puzzled, and perhaps lay the blame upon the fickle Greek nature, or the unstable minds of the multitude in all ages.

But let us look at St. Paul's explanation of the facts, and perhaps we shall find that similar causes still operate to similar effects in our own lives. St. Paul traces the decline in faith to their keeping the Christian Eucharist

without realising what they were doing, without examination of their motives and reasons, and without discernment of what so great a sacrament signified. They had succumbed to the influence of custom, which deadens sensibility. Now habit is the very best servant God has given to men. The power, so easily acquired, of doing the most difficult mechanical actions, such as walking and talking, without conscious effort leaves us free to devote our attention to matters of consequence for their own sake. But then we must also have formed the habit of attending to what is of consequence; else the mere repetition, even of the most spiritual experience, cannot fail to render it as unimpressive as any mechanical process. At this season of the year,[1] when those whose daily task-work lies in towns are escaping, if they can, into the pure air of the country, we may have instructive evidence of the power of familiarity to numb the perceptive powers to experiences which are not considered to be of real use and interest. We go into the fields and woods, and "each rural sight, each rural sound" appeals to us with its lavish beauty. But those whose

[1] Preached September 6.

lives are passed in these surroundings are perhaps less responsive to this aspect of things. What they observe in nature is not its beauty, but its bearing upon their daily needs. They have formed the habit of attending to the signs of the weather, as we, perhaps, to the signs of beauty. Each attends to what he has formed the habit of attending to: the rest slips by unnoticed. But then, to go a step further—it may be that although the appearances of beauty in nature may arrest us because of our habit of attending to them, yet the meaning of that beauty may be lost upon us, as perhaps the beauty itself upon the ploughman, just because to that meaning we have never given attention. We have been content with the bare fact. We compare this sunset with another that we recollect in such a place at such a time; we measure the view from this hill against the view from that; but we may miss altogether the message that these things have for us: the world, "charged with the grandeur of God," may not even suggest the thought of God to our hearts at all. If, then, the thoughts which come to us in our leisure lack insight, what chance is there that our

daily task-work, if it is hard and absorbing, should open our eyes to the powers behind the world, and behind our work in it?

Now it is just because of this limitation of our minds that certain times have been set apart in which we deliberately break through the familiar outer aspect of things; times when we cease to be concerned with the work and the food and the beauty of the earth in and for themselves, but look through them to what lies beyond; and, to guide our aspirations at these times, certain ordinances have been established, one pre-eminently in which the familiar truth that man lives by bread becomes a symbol of the greater truth that he lives by the Word of God. It was precisely the failure to make the right use of this means of grace to which St. Paul attributes the spiritual sloth of the Corinthians. He charges them with want of discernment in the act of Holy Communion. This sacrament was, as it were, a window made for them from earth into heaven, and they closed and darkened it from within. They made its sacredness common, treating it as an ordinary meal, instead of receiving it as the touchstone by which all

familiar things were to be seen in their true meaning, the key to the interpretation of human life. Instead of trying to carry the truth learnt at the Eucharist into every-day life, they brought the half-truths of every day into their Eucharist. Instead of interpreting the world by that, they interpreted that by their common experience of the world. The Sacrament was thus made useless ; nay, worse than useless ; it became a stumbling-block instead of a blessing through their want of discernment. They ate and drank unworthily, and so they ate and drank judgment to themselves.

There are three ways in which the Spirit of God has taken to Himself a body : in the world of nature, in the soul of man, and in the Church ; and the Sacrament is designed, under one or other of its aspects, to keep us in touch with His real and active presence in these various spheres. In each we are to penetrate through the outer form to the spirit within.

1. The Sacrament sheds light upon the world of nature. St. Paul suggests this truth in the previous chapter of the Epistle, when he compares the Christian symbols with the "spiritual meat and drink" which fed the

Israelites in their wilderness wanderings, as he had compared the water of baptism with the sea that separated them from slavery and the cloud that guided their onward journey. The use of those symbols had been to compel their minds to acknowledge *in those particulars* the presence and guidance of God, and so enable them to believe in His providence where He was less obviously present. This side of the doctrine of the Eucharist was more clearly emphasised in the early Church when the bread and wine were solemnly offered, not only as now on behalf of the congregation, but by the congregation itself in acknowledgment that all gifts of life are from God. If this truth is recognised, then from that one point of light the brightness spreads itself over the whole face of nature; we go on to remember that it was through the Word of God that the worlds were framed in the beginning; that still they are upheld by the word of His power; that the universe was created for our sakes; and that the beauty of outward things which fills our spirits with joy is itself the visible sign of the joy of God's creating Spirit. If we once acknowledge that our daily manna

is from God, that "the rock is Christ," then we shall recognise His presence again and again and always; if we discern His guidance where it is most evident we shall believe in it where it is hidden; in famine as in plenty, in sickness as in health, in death as in life. There are many things we can do to help us to escape from that superficial familiarity with the world which breeds insensibility. The visiting of strange places, the study of painting, the reading of poetry—all serve in their several ways to keep alive the spirit of wonder. But, beyond all these things, the secret of freshness in our outlook upon the world is to penetrate to the secret spring of freshness within it, which is the Spirit of God, in whom all things subsist.

2. But secondly, and to some this may seem a more practical result, the Eucharist throws light upon the true nature of man: both by making clear to us the principle of the life of Him who was the perfected type of the race; a life that was summed up in the words, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God'; and then by assuring us that in the strength of His Spirit we also can make the same offering and live the same life. Who that comes to the Lord's

Table thoughtfully and reverently can fail to gain light upon himself—to "discern" what he is, and what he may become? To begin with, his soul is no longer lost in a crowd; each for himself singly makes his act of faith and realises his dependence upon God. At that moment, in that presence, no one can doubt his true nature and high destiny. We come as God's children, made in His image; who yet, because sin has defaced us, have required to be re-made in His image by conformity to the Spirit of His Son, and are always requiring it. Our conscience requires ever more light, our will ever more strength; and for that we come. Then, at God's altar, we kneel to offer Him ourselves, all that we have, all that we are, that, after whatever trial and tempering He thinks fit, He may use us for His service. We say, "Here, O Lord, we offer Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies," in His name who offered Himself that we might make the same offering. Does not such an act shed light upon our lives? do we not here discern our true nature, that we are indeed the children of God, coming for His blessing that we may do His will on earth as it is done in heaven?

And if that be the fact, and we discern it so to be, what room is there for "judgment"? If we are God's children, whom He is calling to His table, and if we delight in His calling, and realise our sonship, and seek to learn His will, why should we doubt that He will reveal it to us? The wisest of the Greeks said that all sin sprang from ignorance, and Isaiah said the same: "My people are consumed for lack of knowledge." Let us welcome, then, the Sacrament in which we may learn to know God and to know ourselves. At the Holy Table, as our spirits come to be fed by the Spirit of God, and as we offer ourselves for His service, in and through the beloved Son, there shines for us a light which will illuminate all our lives, if we will but discern it.

3. Once more, the Holy Communion sheds light upon our relations with our brethren in the Church of Christ. As we kneel together round the one board, and share the same bread and the same cup, we are seen to be, as St. Paul says, a unity, not only made of one blood, but re-made in one spirit; the many members of the one body of Christ. In this sense also the Sacrament should open our eyes to discern

the Lord's body. In our ordinary walks and ways we are far too little interested in one another; it is in the Holy Communion that we first come to understand the meaning of our Lord's commandment to "love one another" and to fathom its difficulty. We are "His body" because He gave Himself for us, offering His personal body that He might again take flesh in His Church; and "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." So we acknowledge, as we kneel together.[1] But we know how restricted our love is in actual fact; how hampered it is. Once, perhaps, in our lives we are, as we say, "in love," and the fountains of our deeper nature are broken up; for one person we do conceive a desire of sacrifice; add to this a parent's affection for his children, a child's for his parents, and you have exhausted all the interest in others that

[1] It may be doubted whether our present custom of having in every church several celebrations of Holy Communion on a Sunday morning does not obscure the idea of fellowship in the Sacrament. We do not realise the unity of the body. It should be possible in our parish churches to hold a service periodically, at which the whole body of the faithful should communicate together; an hour being fixed (*e.g.* 10 a.m.) not too late for those who communicate fasting.

many find it in them to bestow. And yet we have ties to so many others, who could be immeasurably helped by our wisdom and sympathy, if we would but discern their need and claim. It is through the discernment of these ties and bands which knit us together in the body of Christ that Christian love must have its perfect work. A mere sentiment of pity for distress or poverty in general is but a parody of Christian love. Some of us may remember a London season when philanthropy became a fashion among the idle rich, and was presently succeeded by a fashion of ostentatious extravagance which abandoned even the customary restraints of good taste. It is hard to discern the links that bind East and West. But we have all societies in which we can realise our membership without difficulty; we are all bound by some discernible relationships with other men. We are landlords or tenants, employers or employed, householders or domestic servants, tradesmen or customers; and the temptation is always strong upon us to treat these relationships, not as ligaments in a human body, but as parts of some self-working, inhuman machinery into which the law of duty does

not enter. And then there are our friends. Let charity learn her function of good-will and self-denial in these narrower circles; let her discern her Lord's image in those about her daily path who call upon her for justice and mercy; and her eye will become clearer, and her heart more ready, and her wisdom surer in ministering to the stranger.

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20

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